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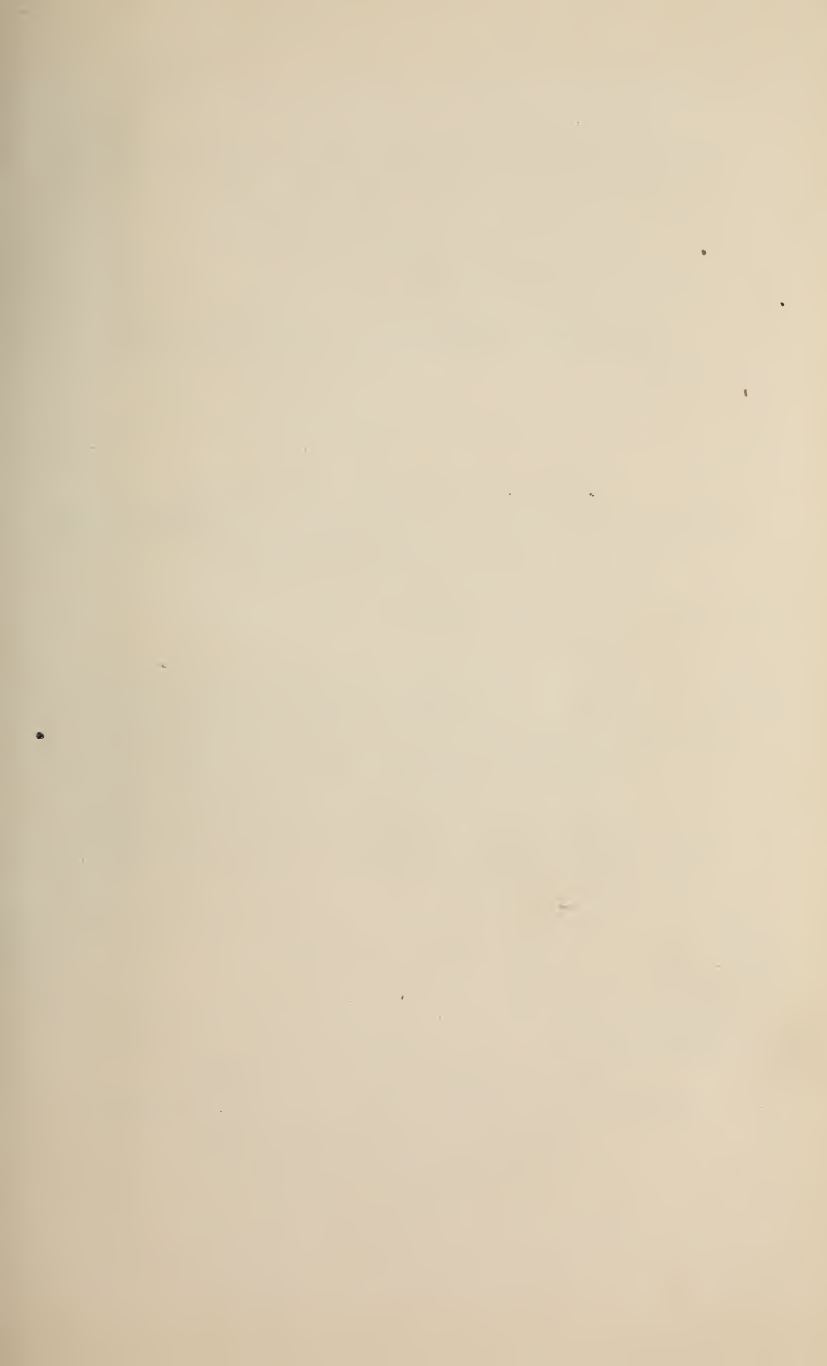
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# MISSILES OF TRUTH:

WITH

## AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

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BY W. W. GARDNER, D. D.,

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"Church Communion," etc.*

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"By grace are ye saved through faith."—Eph. 2: 8.

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism."—Eph. 4: 5.

"My kingdom is not of this world."—John 18: 36.

"But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest; for, as concerning this sect, we know that every-where it is spoken against."—Acts 28: 22.

"Holding forth the word of life."—Phil. 2: 16.

"Abstain from all appearance of evil."—1 Thess. 5: 22.

"It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."—Jude 3.

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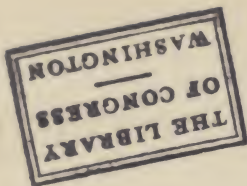
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## PREFACE.

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The following "MISSILES" demand a word of explanation. They have been selected from a number of circulars, essays, and sermons, prepared at different times and for various occasions, each intended to be complete in itself on the subject treated. Hence repetition on some points was unavoidable. The original form of none has been materially changed, but all appear as first written and spoken, with slight modifications. They were not prepared with any reference to publication, though all were requested for publication when presented.

At the urgency of judicious brethren, the author revised and stereotyped half the book about two years since, but the want of means and time has delayed the work until the present. *Six Missiles*, with an Introductory Essay, are now published in a dollar book of some 300 pages. The *second* and *fourth* Missiles especially have an important bearing on the Communion question, and are necessary to the completeness of the Communion argument. It is hoped, therefore, that all those who have the author's work on "CHURCH COMMUNION" will supply themselves with his "MISSILES OF TRUTH," and read them together.

Some of these Missiles are on controverted subjects, on which some of our ablest and best brethren differ in opinion. It is not to be expected, therefore, that all will agree with the author on every point. But if, *taken as a whole*, the work is calculated to do good, all may consistently commend and circulate it, just as we do other human productions from which we dissent on minor points.

At the low price at which the book is offered, and the large discount allowed agents, editors, and ministers, the profits on the work are necessarily small. But the leading object of the author is to do good, and hence he wishes to bring it within the reach of the poorer members of our churches. Deeply sensible of the imperfections of the production, the author commends it to all lovers of truth, praying that God would make it a means of promoting unity of faith and practice among his people, and of suppressing error and prejudice in the world.

W. W. GARDNER.

Russellville, Ky, July 4, 1874.

# CONTENTS.

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PREFACE..... iii-iv

## INTRODUCTORY ESSAY: REMISSION OF SINS.

I. The GROUND of remission: 1. Not works of righteousness which we do. 2. But the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and nothing else.

II. The CONDITIONS or TERMS of remission. These are *Repentance* and *Faith*, including *Prayer*.

III. The TIME when and ACT in which remission is promised and obtained. The *very instant* a penitent sinner believes in Christ, and in *that very act*, previous to and independent of baptism.

IV. Bible EVIDENCES of remission. 1. Love to God and his people. 2. Peace in believing and joy in hope of future glory. 3. A relish for and delight in spiritual things. 4. A desire for the salvation of sinners. 5. The inward witness of the Holy Spirit. 6. The spirit of universal obedience to Christ.

PRACTICAL DEDUCTIONS. Hence, 1. Baptism is not a condition or means of remission, like repentance and faith. 2. If it were, then salvation would be of works. 3. Baptism is a symbolic declaration of remission. 4. Remission of sins is a scriptural qualification for baptism. 5. This view is both reasonable and scriptural..... 1-18

## MISSILE NO. I.

### FAITH AND BAPTISM, INCLUDING THE PRACTICAL USES OF BAPTISM.

I. FAITH IN CHRIST. 1. What it is. 2. What it implies. 3. What it includes.

- II. **VALID BAPTISM.** It includes, 1. A scriptural mode. 2. A scriptural subject. 3. A scriptural design. 4. A scriptural administrator.
- III. **PRACTICAL USES OF BAPTISM.** 1. A formal and practical profession of faith in and submission to the Holy Trinity. 2. A formal and public induction into Christ's visible kingdom. 3. A symbolic declaration of the remission of sins by faith. 4. An emblematic washing away of sins through faith. 5. A symbolic representation of Christ's burial and resurrection, and of our union with him by faith. 6. The appointed ceremony of Christian profession and oath of allegiance to Christ. 7. The answer of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- PRACTICAL DEDUCTIONS.** Hence, 1. Baptism is an ordinance of great practical importance. The scriptural relation of baptism to salvation. 3. The scriptural qualifications for baptism. 4. All candidates for baptism should be previously instructed. 5. The great reason why Baptists practice Church Communion. 6. The duty of all converts in regard to baptism..... 19-60

## MISSILE NO. II.

### THE ADMINISTRATOR OF BAPTISM.

- I. **TO WHOM** the authority to baptize belongs. 1. It was first given to John the Baptist. 2. It was next given to Christ's chosen disciples. 3. It was then fully given to "the eleven." 4. Finally it was given to the churches, to whom it now belongs.
- II. **AN AUTHORIZED** administrator required. Proved, 1. From the appointment of John the Baptist. 2. From the appointment of certain disciples. 3. From the re-appointment of the eleven apostles. 4. From recorded examples.
- III. **THE SCRIPTURAL QUALIFICATIONS** for an administrator. 1. Baptism on a credible profession of faith. 2. Regular membership in a Gospel Church. 3. Correct faith and practice. 4. Scriptural ordination by a Gospel Church.

- IV. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED. 1. "The authority to preach necessarily includes the authority to baptize." 2. "Any one who makes a disciple is authorized to baptize him." 3. "John the Baptist was not baptized." 4. "If God blesses the preaching of others, we should receive their immersions." 5. "If the candidate is satisfied, the baptism is valid." 6. "To reject alien immersions, would compel us to trace our apostolic succession." 7. "After all, the immersion of a believer is baptism, by whomsoever administered."
- V. EVILS of "alien immersion." 1. It is unscriptural, and hence not baptism at all. 2. It introduces unbaptized persons into Baptist Churches. 3. It legitimately leads to Mixed Communion. 4. It is glaringly inconsistent in Baptists to receive it. 5. It is a public indorsement of Campbellite and Pedobaptist Churches. 6. It tends to produce discord in Baptist Churches. 7. It is bad policy, and loses us many members.
- VI. PRACTICAL DEDUCTIONS. Hence we learn, 1. Who are scriptural administrators of baptism. 2. What constitutes scriptural and valid baptism. 3. That every believer may know that he has scriptural and valid baptism. 4. That Baptists stultify themselves by receiving "alien immersion." 5. The duty and interest of Baptists in regard to "alien immersion." 6. How this vexed question may be amicably and finally settled. 7. The great importance of having our rising ministry properly instructed on this subject.
- CONCLUDING REMARKS. 1. To Baptist ministers who were received and ordained on "alien immersion." 2. To immersed Baptists in Campbellite and Pedobaptist Churches. 3. To all Baptist Churches and ministers—a word of exhortation..... 61-152

## MISSILE NO. III.

## THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

- I. The NATURE of Christ's kingdom. 1. It is of *heavenly* origin. 2. It is *spiritual* and *holy*. 3. It is *peaceful* and *quiet*. 4. Yet it is *visible* and *powerful*.

- II. The ORIGIN of Christ's kingdom. It was set up under the ministry of John the Baptist. A new order of things was to be established under John. The old dispensation now passed away, and the kingdom of Christ was fully inaugurated.
- III. The PROGRESS of Christ's kingdom. It commenced with the first convert baptized by John on a credible profession of repentance and faith, and increased with every additional convert thus baptized, whether by John or Jesus or the apostles. Destined to fill the whole earth.
- IV. The TERMS of admission into Christ's kingdom. 1. Repentance toward God. 2. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. 3. Baptism on a credible profession of faith.
- V. The RELATION subsisting between Christ's kingdom and churches. 1. They are not identical, though intimately connected. 2. The kingdom embraces all the churches. 3. The churches are the sole executives in the kingdom.
- PRACTICAL DEDUCTIONS. Hence, 1. The kingdom of Christ is a subject of transcendent importance. 2. The kingdom of Christ is greatly misunderstood and perverted. 3. Valid baptism is essential to admission into Christ's visible kingdom, and to membership in a Gospel Church. 4. It is the immediate duty of penitent believers to enter Christ's kingdom by baptism, preparatory to entering a visible church. 5. The kingdom of Christ set up under John the Baptist is everlasting ..... 153-186

## MISSILE No. IV.

### IDENTITY OF APOSTOLIC AND BAPTIST CHURCHES.

#### INTRODUCTION.

- § THE WORD CHURCH DEFINED AND EXPLAINED. 1. The meaning of the original word *ekklesia* as employed by the ancient Greeks. 2. Its meaning as applied by Christ to his first church. 3. The scriptural meaning of the word *church* as used by the apostles.
- § A DIVINE MODEL OF CHURCH POLITY GIVEN. Proved, 1.

From Scripture analogy. 2. From New Testament examples.  
3. From Apostolic Teaching.

#### IDENTITY OF APOSTOLIC AND BAPTIST CHURCHES.

- I. They are Identical in Constitution.
- II. They are Identical in Membership.
- III. They are Identical in Faith and Practice.
- IV. They are Identical in Rights and Privileges. 1. The apostolic churches possessed the sole right of discipline. 2. They possessed the right of electing their own officers.
- V. They are Identical in Government.
- VI. They are Identical in Permanent Officers. 1. The apostolic churches were furnished with bishops or elders, also called pastors. 2. They were also furnished with deacons.
- VII. FACTS DEDUCED FROM THE SUBJECT. Hence we learn, 1. That the apostolic churches and Baptist Churches are identical in every essential particular. 2. None but Baptist Churches can justly claim such identity with apostolic churches. 3. The great reason why all Baptists should practice Church Communion and reject "alien immersion." 4. That Baptist Churches, like the apostolic churches, are divinely adapted to universal extension. 5. That Baptist church government has more advantages, and is less liable to abuse, than any other form. 6. That Baptist Churches, like the apostolic churches, need a high degree of intelligence and piety among the membership. 7. That our rising ministry need the most thorough instruction and training. 187-261.

#### MISSILE No. V.

##### BIBLE CLAIMS OF MISSIONS.

- I. From the Commission and Example of Christ. 1. From the commission of Christ. 2. From the example of Christ.
- II. From the Example and Teachings of the Apostles. 1. From the example of the apostles. 2. From the teachings of the apostles.
- III. From the Practice of the Apostolic Churches. 1. They en-

gaged in the work of home missions. 2. They also engaged in the work of foreign missions. 3. They voluntarily united in sustaining missions at home and abroad. 4. They united in supporting Paul among the destitute and heathen. 5. They adopted various methods of raising money for charitable and missionary purposes.

DEDUCTIONS FROM THE SUBJECT. Hence we learn, 1. The identity of ancient and modern missions. 2. The method of conducting home and foreign missions the same then as now. 3. The home field claims our first attention. 4. Home and foreign missions hold peculiar claims upon us as Baptists. 5. We have peculiar encouragements to prosecute the work of missions. 262-289.

### MISSILE No. VI.

#### OBJECTIONS TO MODERN DANCING.

- I. Modern dancing is a worldly amusement.
- II. Modern dancing has the appearance of evil.
- III. It obscures the light of Christians.
- IV. It gives offense to good brethren.
- V. It leads to greater evils.
- VI. It is incompatible with every Christian duty.

PRACTICAL DEDUCTIONS. Hence we learn, 1. That modern dancing is unscriptural, and of evil tendency. 2. That no valid reason can be offered in favor of modern dancing. 3. The duty of churches and pastors in regard to dancing. 290-304.

# INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

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## REMISSION OF SINS.

NOTE.—The substance of this Essay was preached at the Bracken Baptist Association in 1855, and requested for publication by numerous brethren. By special request it was thrown into its present form for "*Ford's Christian Repository*," in February, 1872, with the right to use it again.

THE phrase, "*Remission of Sins*," is used in the Scriptures interchangeably with *pardon* and *forgiveness*, and signifies deliverance from the guilt and punishment of sin. But it is never used in the Bible as synonymous with *justification*, though it is inseparably connected with it. Yet they are so distinct in their nature, that though they always co-exist and are applicable to the same person, they are not applicable *in the same sense*; for it is impossible that an individual should be both innocent and guilty at the same time. Justification applies to penitent believers with respect to the *Law*, while remission of sins applies to them with respect to the *Author* of the law. The former frees us from condemnation, and entitles us to everlasting life, the latter merely frees us from the guilt and punishment of sin. The one respects the claims of *justice*, and regards believers as completely righteous; the other

respects the claims of *mercy*, and regards them as exceedingly sinful. Justice demands the punishment of the sinner, mercy pleads for his pardon on the terms of the Gospel. The obedience of Christ unto death answers both demands, giving punishment to justice and forgiveness to mercy. "For Christ is the end of the law *for righteousness* to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10: 4); and "in whom we have redemption through his blood, *the forgiveness of sins*, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. 1: 7.)

Thus the penitent believer is completely righteous as he stands accepted in the beloved Son of God, and his sins are all washed away through the atoning blood of Christ. In the eye of the law, therefore, he is as innocent as Adam from the hands of his Maker, his sins having been imputed to his Surety. In this sense, then, the penitent believer is both justified and pardoned at the same time, though not in the same sense. Considered in and of himself, he is just as unworthy as he was before, and he is conscious of the fact; but viewed in Christ, he is as perfect and spotless as an angel in heaven. (See Col. 2: 10.) Hence we see that justification includes remission of sins as the larger circle includes the smaller, though they are essentially distinct in nature. They are concomitants and always co-exist. Notice,

## I. THE GROUND OR MERITORIOUS CAUSE OF REMISSION.

1. *It is not works of righteousness which we do.* If it were, then we would have whereof to boast. But

in the wisdom of God, all boasting is excluded. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that (salvation) not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2: 8-10.) "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3: 5-7.) "Therefore by the deeds of law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom. 3: 20.) Now this necessarily excludes *baptism* as a condition or means of justification and pardon, for baptism is a work of righteousness which we do. (See Matt. 3: 15.) What, then, is the ground of remission of sins? We answer,

2. *The atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and nothing else.* This is the *Ground*, and the *only* ground of remission. As it is written: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his stripes are we healed." (Isa. 52: 5.) "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4: 12.) "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." (Acts 13: 38.) "Being justified

freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 3 : 24.) "For Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." (1 Peter 3 : 18.)

Such is but a *specimen* of the uniform teachings of the Scriptures on this subject, all going to prove that the atoning Sacrifice of Christ is the *only ground* of the remission of sins. Indeed, there never was any other ground of pardon and salvation. Abel and Enoch, Abraham and Moses, David and all the saved of former dispensations looked *forward* by faith in the promises of God to the Savior to come, just as we now look *back* by faith in the Divine testimony to the same Savior who did come. (See Rom. 4 : 3-13; Heb. 11 : 6-26.) Notice,

## II. THE CONDITIONS OR TERMS OF REMISSION OF SINS.

What are the Conditions of remission? We answer, *Repentance* toward God, and *Faith* in our Lord Jesus Christ, including *Prayer*. These are the *conditions* and the *only* conditions of remission. This is evident from the word of God, only a specimen of which can be given here. John the Baptist preached in the wilderness of Judea, saying: "*Repent ye*, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3 : 2); and to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, he said, "Bring forth therefore, *fruits worthy* of repentance; and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father," etc. (Luke 3 : 8.) And Paul says:

“John verily baptized with the baptism of *repentance*, saying unto the people, that they should *believe* on Him who should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” (Acts 19 : 4.) And our Lord commenced the lesson where John left it, and preached the same doctrine. When John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel, and saying : “The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand ; *repent ye, and believe the Gospel.*” (Mark 1 : 15.) And the Savior included these very conditions of pardon and none others, in his final Commission to his chosen disciples. (See Matt. 28 : 18–20 ; Mark 16 : 15, 16 ; and Luke 24 : 45–47.)

The Apostles and Evangelists went every-where proclaiming the same everlasting Gospel. When Jesus first sent them forth among the lost sheep of the house of Israel, “they went out and preached that men *should repent.*” (Mark 6 : 12.) And when they were fully endued with power from on high, they went into all the world, and preached the Gospel to every creature ; “testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, *repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (Mark 16 : 15 ; Acts 20 : 21.) To the idolatrous Athenians Paul said : “The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every-where to *repent*” (Acts 17 : 30) ; and to the penitent jailer at Philippi, Paul and Silas said : “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*” (Acts 16 : 31.)

In all ages and under all dispensations, repentance and faith, including prayer, have been the *only condi-*

tions of pardon and salvation. Accordingly, Peter says: "To him (Christ) give *all the prophets* witness, that through his name *whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.*" (Acts 10 : 43.) Now, faith alone is mentioned here, but repentance is implied ; for faith and repentance are *correlative terms*, like husband and wife, or parent and child, and the one necessarily presupposes the other. Genuine repentance always leads to faith in Christ, and faith always implies repentance ; for both are essential to salvation. Hence it is that remission of sins is sometimes promised on the condition of faith, and sometimes on that of repentance ; because they are concomitants, and can not exist separate and alone in conversion. Whenever, therefore, faith only is expressed, as above, repentance is implied, and *vice versa*. As it is written : " Except ye *repent*, ye shall all likewise perish " (Luke 13 : 3) ; and " he that *believeth not*, shall be damned." (Mark 16 : 16.)

But this is not true of *baptism*, or any other overt act of obedience. Repentance and faith do not imply and involve baptism, nor do they necessarily lead to its observance ; for when a penitent sinner believes in Christ, and rejoices in a consciousness of pardon, there is not, nor can there be, any certainty that he will live to be baptized. True, the *spirit* of universal obedience to Christ exists in every believing heart and is essential to salvation, but the exercise of that spirit in baptism and other outward acts of Christian obedience is not essential, though it is a duty binding upon all penitent believers. The penitent thief was saved on the

cross through faith in Christ in answer to prayer, and possessed the spirit of obedience, but he was not permitted to exercise that spirit in acts of Christian obedience. (See Luke 23 : 39-43.) The same is true of many others who have embraced the Savior in a dying hour. Now, if it be said that in all such cases God takes the *will* for the *deed*, we answer, that this could not be, if baptism were a *condition* of salvation, like repentance and faith ; for every sinner must repent or perish, believe or be damned. Hence it is that while salvation, including remission, is every-where predicated on repentance and faith both separately and together, it is nowhere predicated on *baptism* ; and this proves that baptism is not a condition or means of salvation, like repentance and faith. Hence it is evident that repentance and faith, including prayer, are the only conditions of remission of sins. Notice,

### III. THE TIME AND ACT IN WHICH REMISSION IS PROMISED AND OBTAINED.

When and in what act or exercise is the remission of sins promised and actually obtained ? We answer, that it is promised and received the *very instant* a penitent sinner believes in the Lord Jesus Christ with all his heart, and in *that very act*, without the intervention of man or ceremony. As it is written : “He that *believeth on Him* is not condemned”—that is, he is justified and pardoned ; “but he that *believeth not*, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.” (John 3 : 18.) “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that hear-

eth my word and *believeth* on Him that sent me, *hath everlasting life*, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life." (John 5: 24.) Here the remission of sins is necessarily included, and baptism is neither expressed nor implied. "And by Him *all that believe are justified from all things*, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts 13: 39.) Paul here declares, that all who believe *are justified from all things through faith in Christ*, and in *that very act*. And being justified, they are also *pardoned*, for justification necessarily includes the remission of sins.

These and numerous other passages clearly establish the fact, that the remission of sins is promised and actually received the *very moment* a penitent sinner believes in Jesus Christ, and in *that very act*, independent of and prior to baptism and all other outward acts of obedience. Thus Abraham was justified and pardoned centuries before baptism was instituted. As it is written : "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for *righteousness*," or justification. (Rom. 4: 3.) This occurred above *forty years* before God tried the patriarch's faith by requiring him to offer up his son Isaac. (See Gen. 22: 1-14.) And thus all true believers are now justified, pardoned and saved. What saith the Scriptures ? "To him that worketh not, but *believeth* on Him that justifieth the ungodly, *his faith* is counted for righteousness." (Rom. 4: 5.)

Now the fact that Abraham's faith was counted unto him for righteousness, says Paul, "was not written for his sake alone, but for us also, to whom it shall be im-

puted, if we believe on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." (Rom. 4: 23, 24.) And just as no overt act of obedience intervened between Abraham's faith and justification *as a condition of pardon*, so no outward act intervenes between our faith and justification *as a condition of remission*. It is evident, therefore, that faith is *the act*, and the *only* act, in which the penitent sinner is justified and pardoned. And the experience of all true Christians corroborates the Scriptures on this subject. With one voice, they all testify that they obtained mercy and enjoyed the evidences of forgiveness *previous* to baptism or any other overt act of obedience. True, some imagine that they obtained the remission of sins *in baptism*, and they enjoy a delusive peace, like the honest Catholic in the confessional. Hence it is certain that the remission of sins is promised and received the *very instant* we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in *that very act*, independent of and prior to baptism and every other act of outward obedience. "Therefore we conclude," says Paul, "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of law;" and "it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end that the promise might be sure unto all the seed." (Rom. 3: 28; 4: 16.) Notice,

#### IV. BIBLE EVIDENCES OF REMISSION OF SINS.

And here it should be borne in mind that a change of heart, justification, pardon and adoption, are *concomitants*. Hence the evidences of one are evidences of all, for they can not exist separate and alone.

Now the evidences of the remission of sins are of two kinds, *internal* and *external*, or those known to us by our *consciousness*, and those known to others by our *words* and *actions*. And in the order of nature, the internal evidences must exist *previous* to the external, just as the tree must first be made good before it can bear good fruit. Among the *internal* evidences of remission are the following :

1. *Love to God and to his people.* "God is love;" and hence love is life. By nature we are destitute of love to God and love to his people as such; and hence we are destitute of spiritual life and enjoyment. As the blood is the life of the body, so the love of God is the life of the soul; but sin has corrupted our nature, extinguished divine love in our hearts, and separated between God and us. Hence, we are dead in trespasses and sins, and are by nature children of wrath even as others. (See Eph. 2 : 1-3.) But in the new birth, including remission of sins, the disposition of the soul is changed and the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and this love begets love to God and his people. As it is written : "We love Him, *because* He first loved us." (1 John 4 : 19.) "And every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him." (1 John 5 : 1.) Hence John adds : "We know that we have passed from death unto life, *because we love the brethren.*" (1 John 3 : 14.)

This love is the bond of Christian union, and the soul of all acceptable obedience. (See 1 Cor. 13 : 1-7.) It loves itself wherever found, and is the golden chain that binds all holy beings to God and to one another.

But the existence of this love in the heart is known to us only by our *consciousness*; we know that we love God and his people, because we are conscious of feeling it; just as we know that we love our friends with natural affection.

2. *Peace in believing and joy in hope of everlasting glory* are internal evidences of the remission of sins. "There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord." (Isa. 48: 22.) It is morally impossible for a condemned and guilty sinner to enjoy peace with God. But when the penitent sinner believes in Jesus Christ, God for Christ's sake, forgives his sins. Pardon is granted in heaven, but a consciousness of the fact is instantly communicated to the penitent believer by the Holy Spirit, who implants *love, joy, peace*, and other evidences of remission in the heart. (See Rom. 5: 5; Gal. 5: 22, 23.)

Accordingly, Paul, in speaking of the union of believers with Christ by faith, says: "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." (Eph. 1: 13, 14.) "Therefore," the Apostle adds, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5: 1, 2.) And as justification includes the remission of sins, this peace in believing and joy in hope of future glory, spring from a consciousness of pardon and salvation.

Nor is this a doubtful and new doctrine. It was taught by the Prophets and Apostles and by Jesus

Christ himself; and it is experienced in some degree by every true believer in Christ. As it is written: "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." (Isa. 54 : 13.) Our Lord quotes and applies this very passage to all penitent believers. (See John 6 : 45.) And Peter, in speaking of the Christian's faith at the appearing of Jesus Christ, says: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." "Unto you therefore who believe, he is precious." (1 Pet. 1 : 8 ; 2 : 7.)

Now, all may not experience this peace and joy to the same extent at first, nor do any realize them in the same degree at all times; these evidences vary as our faith varies; if our faith be weak, they are weak, and *vice versa*. Some experience only *rest* of soul at first, arising from deliverance from conscious guilt and condemnation. This, indeed, is all that the Savior promises to penitent believers, though he often exceeds his promises. Says He to all penitents: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will *give you rest*." (Matt. 11 : 28.) Here is salvation by grace through faith; and the experience of every genuine Christian corroborates the Scriptures on this subject. And that professor of religion who never felt any measure of this peace and joy, is destitute of true faith in Christ, even though he may have been immersed.

3. *A relish for and delight in spiritual things* are also evidences of the remission of sins. The soul, as well as the body, has its appetites and tastes; its "loves and

hates." The impenitent sinner has no relish for spiritual things. He has no love for God, no love for Christ, no love for holiness; but, on the contrary, his carnal heart is enmity against God; for it is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be, until changed by the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 8: 7.) He despises and rejects the blessed Savior, and will not submit to his holy reign. (Isa. 53: 3; Luke 19: 14.) Hence he enjoys no real pleasure in reading the Bible, in secret prayer, in the public worship of God, or in any spiritual exercise. But the penitent believer finds his chief delight in spiritual and holy acts and objects. He loves God, and desires to love him more; he loves the Savior, and feels him precious to his soul; he loves holiness, and longs to be freed from all sin; he delights in the law of God after the inner man, and glories only in the cross of Christ; in short, he delights in reading the Scriptures, in prayer, in praise, in preaching, and in all holy exercises. His fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And he can say with the Psalmist: "I am a companion of all them that fear God, and keep his commandments." And this is the experience of every believer in Christ. He may not enjoy equal delight in these things at all times, and his spiritual appetite may become vitiated for a season, but he is conscious of having tasted that the Lord is good and gracious, and he hungers and thirsts after righteousness. In his coldest seasons he can say with the man whose sight Jesus restored: "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." (John 9: 25.)

4. *A desire for the salvation of sinners* is another evidence of the remission of sins. While seeking salvation, the anxious sinner is wholly absorbed with his own lost and helpless condition. But as soon as he embraces the Savior, and finds him precious to his soul, at once he begins to desire and pray for the salvation of others. He feels as did David, when he exclaimed: "O taste, and see that the Lord is good!" Or he can say with Paul: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." (Rom. 10: 1.) This is the spirit of Him who came to seek and to save lost sinners; and "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Rom. 8: 9.) The converted soul desires the salvation of all men, whether enemies or friends, but he especially desires the salvation of those who are near and dear to him by kindred and social ties. Paul earnestly desired and sought the salvation of the Gentiles, but he had continual sorrow and great heaviness of heart for his Jewish brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh. (Rom. 9: 2.)

This is both the natural and scriptural order of Christian feeling. God makes a divine use of human affections. Accordingly, when John the Baptist directed Andrew to *the Lamb of God*, he immediately went in search of his own brother Simon and brought him to Jesus; and as soon as Christ bid Philip follow him, he at once searched out Nathaniel, and invited him to come and see Jesus of Nazareth. (See John 1: 35-46.) And this desire is felt in some degree by all Christians at times, but it may become very

weak. We feel it in proportion to the nearness with which we live to God, and the attention we give to the subject.

5. *The inward witness of the Holy Spirit* is also an evidence of the remission of sins. The Holy Spirit reproves the unbeliever of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16: 8), but He comforts the believer. Said Jesus to his troubled disciples: "I will pray the Father, and he will send you another Comforter; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world can not receive." (John 14: 16, 17.) Accordingly, Paul says: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. 8: 16.) "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3: 26.) "And because ye are children, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Gal. 4: 6.) And John adds: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (1 John 5: 10); "and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." (1 John 3: 24.)

Now, the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit by dwelling in our hearts and implanting his holy fruits within us. As it is written: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;" and every true believer is conscious, at times, of feeling these sacred influences in his heart.

6. *The spirit of universal obedience to Christ* is another internal evidence of remission of sins. By

nature, our will is opposed to God's will. As it is written: "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." (Ps. 58 : 3.) "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jer. 17 : 9.) "And ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." (John 5 : 40.) But in the new birth, our will is changed and brought into sweet subjection to the Divine will. In the very act of receiving Christ as our Savior, we also submit to him in heart as our sovereign. And if properly instructed and divinely spared, we will walk in all his laws and ordinances blameless. Accordingly, Jesus says: "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" and "if a man love me, he will keep my words." (John 14 : 15, 23.)

Now the *spirit* of obedience to Christ is essential to salvation, though providential circumstances may prevent the exercise of that spirit in baptism and other outward acts of Christian obedience; as, for instance, in the case of the penitent thief on the cross, and in that of many others since. Every real believer is conscious of possessing this spirit, and desires to obey Jesus Christ. The language of every renewed heart is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Christian experience, therefore, corroborates God's word on this subject, and every child of God is a witness for Christ to this truth.

Such, then, are some of the *internal* evidences of remission of sins: as love to God and his people; peace in believing and joy in hope of everlasting glory; a relish for and delight in spiritual things; a desire for

the salvation of sinners ; the inward witness of the Holy Spirit ; and the spirit of universal obedience to Christ. And those who are conscious of possessing these internal evidences, should give the *external* evidences. Hence we learn,

1. *That baptism is not a condition or means of the remission of sins, like repentance and faith.* If it were, then there could be no salvation without baptism. As God will not accept the will for the deed in regard to repentance and faith, so he will not accept the will for the deed in regard to baptism, if indeed it be a condition or means of remission.

2. *That if baptism were a condition or means of obtaining the remission of sins, then salvation would be by works in a necessary sense.* Like circumcision, baptism is a positive rite, and a work of righteousness which we do (Matt. 3 : 15) ; and to make it a condition or means of justification and pardon, would involve the very error which Paul denounced as "another gospel," in Gal. 1 : 6-9. But salvation, including remission, is by grace through faith ; and not of works, lest any man should boast. (See Eph. 2 : 8, 9.)

3. *That baptism is a symbolic declaration of the remission of sins, obtained through faith in Jesus Christ.* In proof of this, see *Missile*, No. I, pp. 16-25, and 26-29. Hence we see that baptism merely declares and symbolizes the remission of sins, previously obtained through faith in Christ. In fact, to make baptism a condition or means of remission, like repentance and faith, would suspend the salvation of penitent believers upon an act which they could not, if they

would, perform for themselves; for no man can baptize himself.

4. *That remission of sins is a scriptural qualification for baptism.* No person is a fit subject for baptism who is not conscious of possessing the internal evidences of remission; such as love, joy, peace, and the spirit of obedience to Christ. And every one that is conscious of feeling these evidences in any degree, should at once confess the Savior with the mouth, and put him on by baptism, preparatory to uniting with a Gospel church. Confession and baptism are among the external evidences of remission, and they develop and strengthen the internal evidences. As it is written: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;" and "whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby we know that we are in him." (John 2: 5.)

5. *That this view is both reasonable and scriptural.* We have shown that it is scriptural; and the experience of every Christian corroborates the Scriptures on this subject. With one voice, the saints of all ages testify, that remission of sins is actually obtained by faith in Christ and in that very act, independent of all external rites. The ground and terms of pardon have been the same under all dispensations, while ceremonies have changed; and the internal evidences of remission are the same now that they were in the days of Abel, Enoch, Noah, and all the saved. To this truth all Scripture bears abundant testimony.

# MISSILES OF TRUTH.

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## MISSILE NO. I.

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### FAITH IN CHRIST AND VALID BAPTISM; WITH THE PRACTICAL USES OF BAPTISM.

NOTE.—Substance of a Sermon preached in Milan, on Lord's Day, November 12th, 1871, at the "WEST TENNESSEE BAPTIST CONVENTION," and published by the unanimous request of that Body. Hence it retains its *original form*, with some expansion.

MARK xvi. 16.—"*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*"

Our text is *elliptical*, and must be interpreted in harmony with the Commission as recorded by Matthew and Luke. Damnation and salvation here are *antitheses*, and as the one is consequent on unbelief, so the other is consequent on faith ; while baptism is mentioned as the first outward act of Christian obedience, and the divinely appointed mode of professing our faith in Christ. And as "*believeth*," here, necessarily implies Christ as the object of faith, so "*baptized*" necessarily implies an administrator of the ordinance.

In the illucidation of this passage, I shall first explain *Faith in Christ*, and then notice *Baptism, with its Practical Uses*. Permit me, then,

I. Briefly to explain FAITH IN CHRIST. And,

1. *What is Faith in Christ?* Abstractly considered, faith is the belief of testimony, whether human or divine. *Faith in God* not only includes the belief of his existence, but also confidence in his veracity; whether relating to things *past* (Heb. 11: 3), to things *present* (Heb. 11: 6), or to things *future*. (Heb. 11: 7.) And it presupposes a knowledge of his character and will. Faith in the promises of God combines reliance and trust, and inspires hope.

*Faith in Christ* is an exclusive reliance on Him for salvation, based upon the testimony of Scripture respecting his person and mediatorial work, and prompted by a feeling sense of our lost and ruined condition. This is that "*one faith*" by which we are united to the "*one Lord*," and which we formally profess by the "*one baptism*," (Eph. 4: 5.) Christ is the object of this faith, just as the brazen serpent was the object of sight to the bitten Israelites. (John 3: 14, 15; comp. Num. 21: 4-9.)

Now faith in Christ is spoken of in different respects. When spoken of in respect to its *author*, it is called "the faith of God" (Rom. 3: 3); in respect to its *object*, it is denominated "the faith of Christ" (Gal. 2: 16); in respect to its *means*, it is styled "the word of faith" (Rom. 10: 8); in respect to its *subjects*, it is called "the faith of God's elect" (Titus 1: 1); and in

respect to its *effects*, it is said to be justifying, purifying, and saving. (Rom. 5 : 1 ; Acts 15 : 9 ; text.) This faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Rom. 10 : 17.) It combines assent with reliance, belief with trust.

2. *What does Faith in Christ imply?* It necessarily implies *repentance*. In the order of nature, repentance precedes faith in Christ, but in the order of time, they always coexist in the new birth. Hence repentance is said to be "*unto life*" (Acts 11 : 18) ; because it fits the sinner for and leads him to trust in Christ who is "the life." (John 14 : 6.) As repentance implies conviction of sin, so faith implies repentance for sin ; and as repentance can not exist without conviction, so faith in Christ can not exist without repentance. This indeed is as reasonable as it is Scriptural. We must be brought by repentance to feel our need of Christ, before we will trust in him for salvation, just as we must feel our need of a physician before we will intrust our life in his hands.

Now, repentance and faith are *correlative terms*, like husband and wife, or father and son ; and, therefore, the one necessarily presupposes the other. Hence it is that salvation is sometimes promised on the condition of repentance alone, and sometimes on that of faith, as in our text ; because they are *concomitants* in conversion and both essential to salvation. As it is written : "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13 : 3) ; and "he that believeth not shall be damned."

Accordingly, the Scriptures uniformly observe this

order. For instance, John the Baptist preached *repentance* (Matt. 3 : 2), "saying unto the people, that they should *believe* on Him who should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." (Acts 19 : 4.) And after John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the same doctrine, and saying : "*Repent ye, and believe the Gospel.*" (Mark 1 : 14, 15.) And he rebuked the lawyers and Pharisees, because they "repented not that they might believe." The Apostles also went out and preached "that men should repent" (Mark 6 : 12) ; "testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, *repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (Acts 20 : 21.) And Peter unites his testimony with that of "all the prophets" in proof of this divine order. (Acts 2 : 38-41 ; 10 : 43.) Hence it is evident that faith in Christ implies repentance.

Faith also implies *prayer*. Faith, like repentance, is the gift of God so far as the disposition to believe is concerned. No sinner can repent and believe unto salvation without divine help, and that help is promised in answer to prayer. Accordingly, Jesus says : "No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him." (John 6 : 44.) Men can not come to Christ of themselves, because they *will not*. (John 5 : 40.) The Father draws sinners to his Son by his Spirit and truth, in connection with preaching, prayer, and personal effort. Hence we are told that when Apollos came to Corinth, he "helped them much who had *believed through grace.*" (Acts 18 : 27.) And to the Philippians Paul said : "*Unto you*

*it is given in behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but to suffer for his sake.*" (Phil. 1 : 29.)

To believe in Christ is to receive him as our Savior and to trust in him alone for salvation. In order to do this we need divine grace, and that grace is promised to those only who seek it by penitential prayer. As it is written: "Ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." (Jer. 29 : 13.) Prayer is the breath of penitence and the voice of faith, crying to God for mercy in the name of Jesus. (See Luke 18 : 13 ; 23 : 42.) It may be said of every real penitent as it was of Paul: "*Behold, he prayeth,*" (Acts 9 : 11.) And the experience of every true Christian corroborates the Scriptures on this subject. Hence we see that faith in Christ necessarily implies prayer, as well as penitence; and the professor of religion that never prayed for salvation previous to baptism is yet in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity.

3. *What does Faith in Christ include?* It evidently includes *belief* as its basis. Belief sustains to faith a relation similar to that which conviction sustains to repentance; and as repentance can not exist without conviction, so faith can not exist without belief. But belief may and often does exist without faith in Christ; for "the devils also believe and tremble" (James 2 : 19); and wicked men, like Agrippa, believe the truth of Scripture, and yet continue in sin. Indeed, no sinner can or will repent and seek salvation, unless he "believes that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11 : 6.) This,

however, does not constitute faith in Christ; it is only the *basis* of faith, as it is also of repentance. The mere belief, therefore, that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God," is not the whole of faith in Him, though it is necessary to it. It is one thing to believe in regard to Christ and quite another thing to believe *in* him. Faith is much more than the belief of this fundamental truth; it has Christ for its *object*, and unites the *consent* of the heart with the assent of the mind; as in Acts 8: 37; Rom. 10: 9, 10; etc. As it is not the mere belief that a man is a skillful physician, but the act of committing our case into his hands and submitting to his treatment, that brings relief to the body: so it is not the mere belief that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, but the act of receiving and submitting to him as our Savior and Sovereign, that brings salvation to the soul. This indeed is both reasonable and scriptural.

Accordingly, the Scriptures never speak of belief as synonymous with faith in Christ, except when it is connected with the prepositions "*in*," "*on*," or "*upon*," expressed or implied, embracing the ideas of *confidence*, *reliance*, *submission*, and *trust*; as in John 3: 16; Acts 16: 31; Eph. 1: 13; and in our text. Faith is the only *receiving* act of the soul; and in the very act of receiving Christ as our Savior, we also submit to him as our Sovereign. In this act our will becomes entirely submissive to the Divine will, and hence we enjoy peace with God and rest of soul. Receiving Christ, therefore, is made the *turning point* of salvation (John 1: 12); and hence when we are baptized "in the name

of Jesus Christ," we formally profess our faith in and subjection to him as our Savior and Sovereign.

Faith in Christ not only includes belief as its basis, but it also includes the *internal evidences* of its own existence; such as love, joy, peace, and the spirit of obedience to Christ. These and other fruits of the Holy Spirit are known to us by our *consciousness*, and this indeed is the only certain evidence of their existence in the heart; all other evidences being merely circumstantial and inferential. Thus the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. (Rom. 8: 16.) And thus "he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (1 John 5: 10), of which every believer is conscious at times. True, in some cases, as in my own, these evidences are very weak at first, owing to the weakness of our faith, but they can not exist in any measure in an unbelieving heart. All these internal evidences of faith in Christ may not be felt at once, nor are any of them enjoyed to the same extent at all times, but *no one* evidence can exist in any heart for a moment without the *Spirit* from which they all spring.

But as every genuine emotion has its counterfeit, we must test our feelings by the word of God. No experience is to be trusted that does not accord with the Scriptures. What, then, are the *Bible evidences* of faith in Christ? Peter answers: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Pet. 1: 8.) "Unto you therefore who believe, he is precious." (1 Pet. 2: 7.) Paul answers:

"Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein ye stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5: 1, 2.) John also answers: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." (1 John 3: 14.) And Jesus answers: "If any man love me, he will keep my words." (John 14: 23.) That is, he has the *will* to obey Christ in all things.

Now, these are among the Scriptural evidences of faith; and all those who are conscious of possessing them in any degree, should confess Christ with the mouth and put him on by baptism. Thus the internal evidences are developed and strengthened. Accordingly, Jesus invites all those who "labor and are heavy-laden" to come unto him, with the promise that he will "*give them rest*"—*i. e.*, save them by grace through faith (Eph. 2: 8); and having received this rest as a gracious gift, he directs them to take his "*yoke*" upon them, and learn of him with meek and lowly hearts, that they may find an *increase* of this rest unto their souls. (Matt. 11: 28-30.) It is evident, therefore, that faith in Christ includes belief as its basis, and also the *conscious evidences* of its own existence in the heart. In fact, no person can certainly know that he believes in Christ, except by his consciousness of the fact; for faith is both a mental and moral exercise. (See Gal. 5: 6.)

Hence we see what faith in Christ *is*, what it *implies*, and what it *includes*. It embraces the whole of

those exercises which constitute *Christian experience* in its beginnings. Salvation is by grace through faith, without works; and both penitence and prayer are necessary to faith in Christ as means to an end. All applicants for baptism and church-membership, therefore, should be required to bring forth "*fruits meet*" for repentance, to justify us in receiving them as believers in Christ. God in his wisdom and goodness has suspended the blessings of salvation upon *faith alone* (not faith by itself), without baptism or any other work of righteousness which we perform; and "it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed." (Rom. 4: 16.) It is so in our text, and throughout the Bible. All that precedes faith is necessary to dispose and enable the sinner to believe in Christ with the heart unto righteousness; and such faith brings immediate salvation, without the intervention of man or ceremony.

Having thus briefly explained Faith in Christ, let us notice,

## II. BAPTISM, WITH ITS PRACTICAL USES.

This is a Baptist convention, and it is always proper on such occasions to present our distinctive doctrines and practices. Yet I am aware that there is a prevailing prejudice even among Baptists against preaching on baptism, owing partly to the unfortunate differences on the subject, and partly to the intemperate manner in which it is sometimes discussed; and this ill-founded prejudice greatly trammels our ministers. But the very fact that such differences exist among Christians

renders it the more necessary that the subject should be frequently and kindly treated. Baptism is an important part of the Gospel, found in almost every recorded discourse of our Lord and his apostles; and, therefore, it ought to be preached in its relative proportions by all our ministers. Nor should any Baptist minister *apologize* or *ask pardon* for preaching this part of God's word. Indeed, Baptists are the only people who dare present the whole truth on this subject; and no Baptist minister can neglect this duty, and have a conscience void of offense toward God and men.

It is not my object at present, however, to preach a regular sermon on baptism, but simply to show its practical uses. Suffice it then to say, that baptism is *immersion* and nothing else. As there is but "one Lord" and "one faith," so there is but "*one baptism*," and that immersion, as all practically admit. The very word selected by the Holy Spirit to denote baptism, means to *dip* or *immerse*, and never to sprinkle or pour. In the language of DR. CHARLES ANTHON, late professor of languages in Columbia College, N. Y., we say: "The primary meaning of the word is to *dip* or *immerse*, and its secondary meanings, if it ever had any, all refer in some way or other to the same leading idea; sprinkling and pouring are entirely out of the question." (See *Introd. to Stuart on Bap.*, p. 7.) Now *keo* means to pour, and *rantizo* to sprinkle, but neither of these words is ever employed to denote baptism. Says JOHN CALVIN: "The very word *baptize* signifies to *immerse*; and it is certain that immer-

sion was the *practice* of the ancient church." (See *Institutes of Religion*, vol. 2, bk. 4, chap. 15, sec. 19, p. 491, by Allen.)

Moreover, the *circumstances* and *places* where baptism was administered imply immersion. We are told that the people resorted to rivers and large confluxes of water, and were baptized "*in Jordan*" (Matt. 3 : 5, 6) ; "*in the river of Jordan*" (Mark 1 : 5) ; and "*in Enon*, near to Salim, because there was *much water* there" (John 3 : 23). The modern supposition that multitudes of men and women would travel for many miles and then go down *into* the river, merely to have a few drops of water sprinkled upon their foreheads, is simply ridiculous. We are at a loss to know how any intelligent Christian can believe such a supposition !

Then, the *figures* used by the inspired writers to represent baptism necessarily require immersion ; as, for instance, a *burial*, *resurrection*, *planting*, etc. (See Rom. 6 : 1-5 ; Col. 2 : 12.) Nothing but immersion can correspond to these figures.

In addition to this, we are expressly told that our Lord was baptized "*in Jordan*," and then came up straightway *out of* the water (Mark 1 : 9, 10) ; and that he was then publicly owned as the Son of God. (Matt. 3 : 13-17.) These facts, recorded by inspiration, speak for themselves, and all combine to prove that *immersion and immersion alone* was practiced by John the Baptist, by the Savior, and by the apostles and evangelists.

But baptism is *much more* than immersion. It

necessarily includes four things, at least, viz.: 1. *A Scriptural Mode*—immersion in water into the name of the Trinity; 2. *A Scriptural Subject*—a penitent believer; 3. *A Scriptural Design*—not in order to obtain pardon, but in declaration of the fact; and 4. *A Scriptural Administrator*—a regularly ordained minister of the Gospel. The want of any one of these four essentials invalidates the ordinance, and renders it null and void. OUR baptism embraces these four particulars, as all practically admit; and such baptism can be obtained only at the hands of an ordained Baptist minister; for none others have authority from a Gospel church to administer the ordinance. With these general remarks, we proceed to show the PRACTICAL USES OF BAPTISM. Among its practical uses we may mention the following:

1. *Baptism is a formal and practical profession of faith in and submission to the Holy Trinity.*

As it is written: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in (*eis* into) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 28: 19.) That is, make disciples by teaching all nations; and then baptize these disciples on a profession of their faith in and subjection to the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As before remarked, in the very act of receiving Christ as our Savior, we also submit to him in heart as our Sovereign; and in our baptism we formally and practically profess both facts. Hence baptism *in the name of Jesus Christ* is equivalent to baptism *in the name of the Trinity*; "for in Him dwelleth all the fullness of

the Godhead bodily." (Col. 2 : 9.) And this indeed accounts for the fact, that we have no record of the Apostles and Evangelists ever using the full formula as given by Matthew. It is simply said that they baptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8 : 16) ; "in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10 : 48) ; and not expressly in the name of the Trinity.

Now, baptism merely in the name of the Father and of the Holy Spirit would not be Scriptural and valid ; for the ordinance always has direct reference to Christ and his mediatorial work, and is one of the three standing witnesses to his Sonship. As it is written : "There are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood ; and these three agree in one." (1 John 5 : 8.) That is, the Holy Spirit bears witness in the heart of every believer, while Baptism and the Supper bear witness to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ ; and these three witnesses agree in one harmonious testimony that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. But while baptism always has necessary reference to Christ and his mediatorial work, it also bears witness to the great doctrine of a Trinity of equal Divine Persons in the Unity of the Godhead ; and hence, by the very act of being baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we formally and practically profess our faith in and submission to the Holy Trinity. And this fundamental truth is necessarily implied in our text.

2. *Baptism is a formal and public induction into the visible kingdom of Christ.*

In reply to Nicodemus, "Jesus answered, Verily,

verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3 : 5.) That the kingdom spoken of here means the visible kingdom of Christ, is clearly implied in verse 12, where Jesus says : " If I have told you *earthly things*"—i. e. things existing *on the earth*, " and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you heavenly things ? " Now, Nicodemus could not have been ignorant of the fact, that baptism was necessary to admission into Messiah's kingdom on earth, for " Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan," had just been thus inducted into it by John the Baptist. (Matt. 3 : 5, 6.) But he was evidently an unregenerate man, though an anxious inquirer, and, like many others, imagined that he could " enter into " and enjoy that kingdom merely by baptism and hereditary descent. (See Matt. 3 : 7-9 ; Luke 3 : 7-9 ; John 3 : 7-9.) And being a *Teacher of Israel*, he was culpably ignorant of the nature of Christ's kingdom, and the necessity of the new birth—doctrines clearly taught in the Old Testament Scriptures ; and, therefore, Jesus rebuked him, saying : " Art thou a Master (or Teacher) of Israel and knowest not these things ? " (Ver. 10.)

Accordingly, DR. C. H. TOY, Professor in the " Southern Baptist Theological Seminary," in an able article on " JEWISH PROSELYTE BAPTISM," says : " Nicodemus, then, must have known of John's preaching and baptism, since as a member of the Sanhedrim (John 7 : 50), he shared in the interest which the Baptist excited, and must have been acquainted with the report

of the embassy. He probably held John to be a reformer, who in the spirit of the old prophets and with a Messianic feeling called the people to a much needed repentance and purity, which he symbolically expressed by an immersion. Our Lord's words "born again" summed up a great mass of teaching in the Old Testament; and a truly spiritually minded Jew ought to have laid hold of the thought as a key to the interpretation of much that he had as yet only partially comprehended. Certainly a "master in Israel," a leader in sacred studies, ought to have done this; and Christ with right expresses surprise at his inability to do it. Nicodemus, on the other hand, was too much under the influence of the superficial external interpretation of his times to lay hold decidedly of the deeper spiritual meaning. It is possible that in the phrase "born of water and of the Spirit" (verse 5), *water* refers to baptism." (See *Baptist Quarterly* for July 1872, pp. 316, 317.)

Accordingly, in the 3d verse, our Lord taught Nicodemus that a man must be "*born again*" in order to "*see*" or enjoy the kingdom of God, which consists of "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14: 17); and in the 5th verse, he explained *how* this spiritual birth was effected, namely, by *the word of God* (1 Pet, 1: 23), and *the Holy Spirit* (ver, 8); and, using "*water*" to denote the truth and its effects, as in Isa. 35: 6; 55: 1; Zach. 14: 8; Eph. 5: 26; he also alluded to baptism as the *initiatory* rite by which the regenerate formally and publicly "*enter into*" his kingdom on earth, and become *qualified* for church-

membership. This is the obvious meaning of the passage, and it harmonizes with the teachings of the New Testament on this subject. Yet it should be remembered that baptism is not mentioned here; it is merely referred to incidentally. Nor is it essential to entering the kingdom of glory, that a man should formally enter into the kingdom of grace by baptism, though it is the first public duty of the regenerate to submit to the ordinance.

Now, God does two things for us in the New Birth: he changes the heart, and cleanses us from sin; and both of these facts are clearly revealed in the Old and New Testaments. (See Deut. 2: 28, 29; 31: 6; Jer. 4: 4; 9: 26; Ezek. 36: 25-27; and Rom. 2: 28, 29; 1 Cor. 6: 11; Phil. 3: 3; Col. 2: 11; Heb. 8: 10-12.) And throughout the Scriptures, a change of heart is ascribed to *the Holy Spirit*, and never to the blood of Christ; while justification, including pardon, is ascribed to *the blood of Christ*, and never to the Holy Spirit. This fact sheds light upon the passage under consideration. As water is a cleansing element, it is a fit emblem of the cleansing blood of Christ; and as we come in contact with that blood by faith, and as faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10: 17), so by *metonymy*, water is here used to denote the truth by which we believe, with an allusion to baptism as the ordinance of initiation into Messiah's kingdom. Hence we see that baptism is a formal and public induction into the visible kingdom of Christ, and a necessary qualification for church-membership.

3. *Baptism is a symbolic declaration of the remission of sins, obtained through faith in Christ.*

This is evident from Acts 2:38. Under the preaching of Peter, attended by the Holy Spirit, that vast multitude were "pricked in their heart"—i. e. pungently convicted of their sins, "and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles: Men and brethren, what shall we do?" verse 37. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins," etc. And here the question arises: What did Peter direct and require these anxious inquirers to do, in order to obtain the remission of their sins? We answer,

(1.) That he expressly commanded them to "*repent*." Repentance is an indispensable condition of remission, as all admit. There is no alternative to any sinner but repentance or perdition. As it is written: Ezek. 18:30; Luke 13:3, 5; 2 Pet. 3:9.

(2.) Peter also required them to *believe in Jesus Christ* by necessary implication. This is evident from the relation subsisting between repentance and faith as associate graces and correlative terms. They necessarily imply and presuppose each other, and both are essential to salvation. Hence it is that the blessings of salvation are sometimes promised on the condition of one, and sometimes on that of the other, for they are concomitants and always exist together at the moment of pardon.

This is further evident from verse 41: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized," etc. That is, when they repented of their sins and believed

in Jesus Christ, and rejoiced in the consciousness of pardon, *then*, and not till then, were they baptized on a profession of their faith in and subjection to Him as their Savior and Sovereign.

And this is still further evident from the phrase, "*in the name of Jesus Christ*," which always implies faith in and subjection to him. In proof of this, see Acts 3 : 6, 16 ; 1 Cor. 6 : 11, etc.

(3) Peter also enjoined *Prayer* as a necessary means of obtaining salvation, including the remission of sins. In quoting from the prophet Joel, the apostle said in this memorable sermon : " And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved," Acts 2 : 21. And the apostle Paul enjoined the same duty upon all men more than twenty-five years after the day of Pentecost. (See Rom. 10 : 11-13.) Penitential and believing prayer is an indispensable means of obtaining salvation. In fact, no sinner can repent and believe unto salvation without prayer ; nor can any sinner be saved without repentance, faith, and prayer. All genuine Christians are living witnesses to the truth of God's Word on this subject.

Hence it is clear that Peter directed and required that convicted multitude to repent, believe, and pray, in order to obtain the remission of their sins. But another question comes up here : What is the *relation* of baptism to the remission of sins in this passage ? Did Peter enjoin baptism as a condition or means of obtaining remission, as he did repentance, faith, and prayer ? We answer most emphatically, that he did

not. The passage itself, the context, and the uniform teaching of Peter, as well as the tenor of Scripture, disprove it. We remark,

(1.) That the *syntax* of this passage disproves the doctrine of baptismal remission. We boldly affirm that Peter does not here or elsewhere make repentance and baptism sustain the same relation to the remission of sins. He does not say, "Every one of you repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins," but he does say, "*Repent ye, and let every one of you (i. e. who repents) be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.*" The command to "*repent*," here, is wholly independent of the command to "*be baptized*," and is urged on entirely different grounds. The two verbs can not be construed together. *Metanoesate* is active voice, second person, plural number, and has *ye* understood for its nominative, referring to all the inquiring multitude. *Baptistheto* is passive voice, third person, singular number, and has "*every one*" for its nominative, referring only to such of that multitude as should repent. The verbs, therefore, do not and can not take the same nominative, and hence are entirely independent of each other, as every grammarian will admit.

Now, the duty to "*repent*" is here enjoined upon the whole multitude, on the ground of *universal obligation*, as in Luke 13: 3; Acts 17: 30; 20: 21; 2 Pet. 3: 9; but the duty to "*be baptized*" is enjoined upon such only of that multitude as obeyed the first command. This interpretation of the passage is in perfect harmony with the tenor of Scripture on this subject.

Baptism is binding only on penitent believers. Accordingly, it is said in verse 41: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized." And this view is strengthened by the fact, that sinners are nowhere in the New Testament commanded to repent "in the name of Jesus Christ." (See Matt. 3: 2; Mark 1: 15; Luke 13: 5; Acts 3: 19; 26: 20.) But baptism is every-where enjoined in His name, as in Acts 2: 38; 8: 16; 10: 48; 19: 5; Rom. 6: 3; Gal. 3: 27. Hence it is manifest from this passage itself, that Peter did not enjoin baptism as a condition or means of obtaining the remission of sins, in the sense that he required repentance, faith, and prayer.

(2.) The *context* confirms this interpretation of the passage. Peter, having boldly preached a crucified, risen, and exalted Savior, commanded the inquiring multitude to repent, believe, and call upon God for mercy, with the promise that all those who complied with these conditions should receive the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. (See verses 21-40.) "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized," etc. (Verse 41.) That is, they repented of their sins, believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoiced in the consciousness of pardon and reconciliation *before* they were *baptized* "in the name of Jesus Christ," *declaratory* of the remission of their sins. Now, every unbeliever is condemned already, and is conscious of the fact (John 3: 18, 36), and no condemned sinner can enjoy peace with God; "for there is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord." (Isa. 48: 22; comp. Rom. 3: 17.) It is evident, therefore, that

these persons were justified, pardoned, and saved, before they were baptized and added to the church.

(3.) The *uniform teaching* of Peter corroborates these views of the passage. For instance, in opening the door of faith to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius, the apostle said: "To him (Christ) give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10: 43.) Here, from the very nature of the case, baptism is neither expressed nor implied as a condition or means of remission, for none of the Old Testament prophets knew any thing about baptism. The silence of the grave rests upon the subject of baptism in the Old Testament Scriptures. Yet Peter here unites his inspired testimony with that of "all the prophets," in witness of the fact, that "WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH" in Christ "SHALL RECEIVE REMISSION OF SINS." And let it be remembered, that Peter and "all the prophets" *still* "give witness" to this fundamental truth, for the verb "*give*," here, is in the present tense.

Now this interpretation of the passage is fully sustained by Peter's own account of the conversion of Cornelius and his friends. (See Acts 11: 18; 15: 7-11.) Here all the apostles and brethren at Jerusalem, after hearing Peter's explanation of the matter, "glorified God, saying: Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life;" while Peter himself testified, saying: "And God, who knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us, and put no difference

between us and them, *purifying their hearts by faith.*" And Peter assigned as the reason why Cornelius and "all them who heard the word" should be baptized, that they had already received "the Holy Ghost," as did the believing Jews on the Day of Pentecost. (Acts 10: 47.)

Hence, it is evident from the syntax of this passage, and from the context, and from Peter's uniform teaching, that he did not make baptism a condition or means of obtaining the remission of sins, as he did repentance, faith, and prayer.

Yet there is a sense, and an important sense, in which baptism is "*for*" the remission of sins; not indeed in order to obtain it, but in order to declare and symbolize the fact. Both baptism and the Lord's Supper are symbolic ordinances, and they are "*for*" the remission of sin in precisely the same sense. Jesus, in speaking of the wine, says: "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, *for the remission of sins.*" (Matt. 26: 28.) That is, the wine is the divinely appointed symbol of Christ's blood, which was shed for the remission of sins; and as often as we drink this wine, we symbolically exhibit that blood, by faith in which our sins are actually remitted. Just so it is with baptism. It is the appointed symbol of the same atoning blood, and in the very act of being buried with Christ by baptism into death and raised again in the likeness of his resurrection, we symbolically declare the fact that our sins have been remitted through faith in that blood which cleanseth us from all sin. (1 John 1: 7.)

Now, the preposition *eis*, here rendered “*for* the remission of sins,” is elliptical, and must always be interpreted in accordance with its connection. When *eis* has respect to the shed blood of Christ, it means in order to procure the remission of sins; but when it has respect to the sacramental wine, it means in order to exhibit or symbolize that blood. So when *eis* has respect to repentance, it means in order to obtain the remission of sins; but when it has respect to baptism, it means in order to declare or symbolize the fact. And in the phrase “for the remission of sins,” in Acts 2: 38, *eis* evidently combines both meanings, as it does in Matt. 26: 28; in respect to “repent,” it means in order to *obtain* remission, and in respect to “be baptized,” it means in order to *declare* the fact.

Baptism, in this passage, sustains a relation to *repentance*, implying faith, similar to that which it sustains to *faith*, implying repentance, in Mark 16: 16; and in both passages baptism is mentioned, not as a condition or means of pardon and salvation, but merely as the first outward act of obedience required of penitent believers, and the divinely appointed mode of professing their faith in and submission to the Lord Jesus Christ. Like the Lord’s Supper, baptism simply declares and symbolizes *existing facts*, and the one is no more a condition or means of the remission of sins than the other. This was true of all the symbolic rites of the Mosaic ritual, and the Jews so understood our Lord and Peter in regard to the Supper and Baptism. They were accustomed to use the *sign* for the thing *signified* and often represented the sign as *doing*, what the thing

signified had *already* done ; as, for example, the Pass-over, healing the leper, etc.

Certain it is that *eis* can not be rendered in order to *obtain* the remission of sins in respect to baptism here, without conflicting with all parallel passages. The following are all the passages in the New Testament where baptism and *eis* are in exactly similar connection to that in Acts 2 : 38, and not one of them will allow of being so rendered. Let us briefly examine these passages and test this fact. Take,

(1.) Matt. 3 : 11. "I indeed baptize you with water *eis* (in order to *obtain*) repentance."

(2.) Matt. 28 : 19. "Baptizing them *eis* (in order to obtain) the name of the Father," etc.

(3.) Mark 1 : 9. "Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John *eis* (in order to obtain) Jordan."

(4.) Acts 8 : 16. "Only they were baptized *eis* (in order to obtain) the name of the Lord Jesus."

(5.) Acts 19 : 3. "We were baptized *eis* (in order to obtain) John's baptism."

(6.) Acts 19 : 5. "When they heard this they were baptized *eis* (in order to obtain) the name of the Lord Jesus."

(7.) Rom. 6 : 3, 4. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized *eis* (in order to obtain) Jesus Christ, were baptized *eis* (in order to obtain) his death ? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism *eis* (in order to obtain) death."

(8.) 1 Cor. 1 : 13. "Were ye baptized *eis* (in order to obtain) the name of Paul ? "

(9.) 1 Cor. 1 : 15. "Lest any should say that I had baptized *eis* (in order to obtain) mine own name."

(10.) 1 Cor. 10 : 2. "And were all baptized *eis* (in order to obtain) Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

(11.) 1 Cor. 12 : 13. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized *eis* (in order to obtain) one body." And,

(12.) Gal. 3 : 27. "For as many of you as have been baptized *eis* (in order to obtain) Christ, have put on Christ."

Hence we see that this rendering of *eis* in connection with baptism, makes nonsense of all these passages, and yet they are precisely similar in construction to Acts 2 : 38. Now, if *eis*, here rendered "*for* the remission of sins," means in order to obtain remission, in respect to baptism, then it is clearly an *exception* to all parallel passages in the New Testament, and Peter is justly chargeable with using the preposition here in a sense entirely different from that which any similar passage will admit; and that, too, on the day of Pentecost, when he was instructing a vast multitude of anxious inquirers as to what they must do to be saved, and prescribing the terms of salvation for a lost and ruined world to the end of time. The conclusion, therefore, forces itself upon us, that in order to *obtain* the remission of sins, is not the correct translation of *eis* in respect to baptism in this passage. The force of *eis* in this and all similar passages, is merely to express what the baptized *declared* and *professed* by baptism. and not what they obtained. It is evident, therefore, that the force of *eis* in respect to baptism here, is not in order to obtain the remission of sins, but simply to

declare and symbolize the fact. Baptism, then, is a symbolic declaration of remission, previously obtained through faith in Christ.

4. *Baptism is an emblematic washing away of sins, obtained through faith in the blood of Christ.*

This fact is clearly set forth in Acts 22 : 16. "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." The Scriptures every-where teach that it is the *blood of Christ*, and that alone, which really washes away sins, and that penitent sinners come in contact with that blood at the very instant and in the very act of *faith in Jesus Christ*, independent of and prior to baptism and all other outward acts of obedience. As it is written: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1 : 7.) "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins," etc. (Rom. 3 : 25.) "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." (Rev. 1 : 5.) And it is the blood of Christ and nothing else, that "*purges* the conscience from dead works to serve the living God." (Heb. 9 : 14.)

Thus Paul's conscience was *purged* from dead works, and thus his sins were *actually* washed away, as he himself plainly teaches. (See Rom. 4 : 3 ; 6 : 23 ; 5 ; 1, 2 ; Gal. 2 : 16 ; Phil. 3 : 8, 9.) Now, as the blood of Christ *really* purged the conscience of Paul from dead works and washed away his sins, the question naturally arises here: *In what sense was his sins washed away by baptism?* We unhesitatingly answer that they

were washed away *emblematically*, and in that sense only. Baptism is a most significant ordinance. While its action symbolizes the burial and resurrection of Christ and our union with him in them by faith, its element symbolizes that cleansing from sin, which we experience by faith in his blood. When we believe in Jesus Christ with all the heart, at that moment and in that act, our sins are really remitted or washed away, and we are conscious of the fact; and when we are baptized on a profession of that faith, our sins are *emblematically* washed away. The former is the reality, the latter is the symbol. In the former, Christ washes us in his own blood; in the latter, we wash our-selves in water. In the one we experience a *real* cleansing, in the other a *ceremonial* cleansing; and the latter is declarative of the former.

Perfectly analogous to this was the cleansing of the leper. (See Lev. 14: 1-32.) The law of Moses required the leper to come to the priest, who took him out of the camp and examined his disease; and if the leprosy was really healed, then the priest was required to make an offering for him, and sprinkle the blood of a bird upon him seven times, and pronounce him clean. And after all this, the cleansed leper was required to wash his clothes, shave off his hair, and bathe himself in pure water, that he might be cleansed. Then, and not till then, was he allowed to associate with his family and worship in the Temple. Here, there was first a *real* cleansing, and then a *ceremonial* cleansing; and the one was declarative of the other.

We have a striking example of this in Mark 1:

40-44. There came a leper to Christ, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying: "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand and touched him, and saith unto him, *I will ; be thou clean.* And as soon as he had spoken, *immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.* And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away ; and saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man ; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer *for thy cleansing* those things which Moses commanded, *for a testimony unto them.*" Here the Savior first *cleansed* this leper, and then required him to be *ceremonially* cleansed for a *testimony* unto all the people that he was *really* cleansed.

Precisely so was it with Paul. When he *believed on* the Lord Jesus ; at *that instant* and in *that act* his sins were *really* washed away by the cleansing blood of Christ ; and when he was baptized on a profession of his faith, his sins were *ceremonially* washed away. And as there was a *reason* why the leper should offer an offering "*for*" his cleansing, *after* he had been really cleansed, so there was a *reason* and an important reason, why Paul should be baptized and thus *emblematically* wash away his sins, *after* they had been really washed away through faith in the blood of Christ. He thus symbolically declared the fact that his sins had been *actually* remitted by faith, and was *formally* and *publicly* inducted into the visible kingdom of Christ, and *qualified* for church-membership in that kingdom. Hence it is evident that baptism is an *emblematic* wash-

ing away of sins, *already* washed away by faith in the blood of Christ.

5. *Baptism is a symbolic representation of Christ's burial and resurrection and of our union with him in them by faith.*

This is manifest from Rom. 6 : 1-11 ; Col. 2 : 12. In the first passage, Paul anticipates a Jewish objection to the doctrine of justification by grace through faith without works, and asks : "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein ? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death ? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death ; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." That is, we being dead to sin and alive to God (verses 2 and 11), can not any longer live in the enjoyment and practice of sin ; and being united to Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection by faith, "*therefore* we are buried with him by baptism into death ; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life ;" while the very action of baptism anticipates and prefigures our future resurrection. Thus, by this solemn and significant emblem, we formally profess our *faith* in a crucified, buried and risen Savior, together with the *effect* of that faith in our death to sin, burial, and resurrection to a new and holy life.

In Col. 2 : 12, the apostle presents substantially the same truths. Having shown that the Colossians were *complete in Christ by faith* (verse 10) : being “circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ” (verse 11) ; he therefore adds : “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” That is, they had been united to Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection “through the faith of the operation of God,” and had thus “put off the body of the sins of the flesh ;” and therefore they had symbolically declared the fact by being “buried with Him in baptism ;” that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so they also should walk in newness of life.

Now, the phrases, “baptized (*eis*) into Jesus Christ”—“baptized (*eis*) into his death”—and “buried with him by baptism (*eis*) into death” (Rom. 6 : 3, 4), can not be taken *literally*, without doing gross violence both to reason and Scripture. The idea of being literally baptized into Christ, into his death, or into death itself, is simply ridiculous. Such *moral* effects produced by a *physical* cause would be the most wonderful of all miracles. The preposition *eis*, here, primarily means *into* ; and it can not be properly rendered *in order to* in this passage, although it may be so rendered in other connections. We are not baptized *in order to* Christ, nor *in order to* his death ; neither are we buried with Him by baptism *in order to* our own death to sin, any

more than we are buried literally to kill us. When *eis* is followed by a *person* to whom the action of baptism has reference, it is expressive of the *faith* of the baptized in that person and of his *subjection* to him; as in Matt. 28 : 19 ; Acts 8 : 16 ; 1 Cor. 10 : 2 ; Gal. 3 : 27. And when *eis* is followed by a *doctrine* or *fact* to which the action of baptism has reference, it is expressive of the *faith* of the baptized in that doctrine or fact and of his *reception* of it; as in Acts 19 : 3 ; Rom. 6 : 3, 4, etc. (See Williams' *Expos. of Campbellism*, p. 306.)

What, then, is the real meaning of the phrases, baptized *into* Christ, *into* his death, and *into* death? We answer: *They are highly figurative expressions, designed to set forth the symbolic import of baptism in its relation to Christ, to his death, and to our death to sin through faith.* For illustration: When John the Baptist is said to baptize penitent believers *into* Jordan, *eis* expresses a *literal* fact; but when he is said to baptize *into* repentance (Matt. 3 : 11), *eis* is unquestionably used in a *figurative* or *tropical* sense. So when we are said to be baptized *into* Christ, *into* his death, and *into* death, *eis* is necessarily used *figuratively*, for the nature of these subjects require it. To dip a penitent believer *into* the baptismal waters is a *literal* expression; but to dip him *into* Christ, *into* his death, or *into* death, is obviously *figurative*, though the tropical use of *eis* ought to convey no idea radically different from its literal meaning. Baptism is *immersion*, and the radical idea of baptism is *an immersion into*; and hence its symbolic import must always correspond with this idea.

Hence we see that when *eis* is connected with baptism in respect to *Christ*, it is expressive of our *faith in and subjection to Him* ; and when it is connected with the ordinance in respect to a *doctrine or fact*, it is expressive of our *faith in and reception of* that doctrine or fact, as in Rom. 6 : 3, 4. Our faith is, that Christ *died* for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was *buried*, and that he *rose again* the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Cor. 15 : 3, 4.) Now, all this we symbolically declare and profess by baptism, together with our own death to sin, burial, and resurrection to newness of life through faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior. Thus, as the Lord's Supper symbolically exhibits Christ's *death* (1 Cor. 11 : 26), so Baptism symbolically represents his *burial and resurrection* ; and the two ordinances symbolize the three great facts of Christianity. It is evident, then, that baptism is a *symbolic representation* of Christ's burial and resurrection and of our *union* with Him in them by faith.

6. *Baptism is the appointed Ceremony of Christian profession and the Oath of allegiance to Christ.*

It is the immediate duty of every believer to make a public profession of his faith in and subjection to Christ. This is to be done with the mouth and by baptism. As it is written : " With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10 : 10.) That is, it is with a faith that unites the affections of the heart and the faculties of the mind, that a penitent sinner is justified, pardoned, and saved ; and it is with

his *own mouth* that he is to profess this fact, preparatory to baptism. Our Lord lays great stress on the duty of confessing him publicly. Says He: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 10 : 32, 33.) And Paul connects such a confession with salvation ; not indeed as a *means* to an *end*, like faith, but as an imperious duty, indicative of the state of the heart. (Rom. 10 : 9.)

Now, profession is the substance, and baptism is the form ; but Christ requires both the form and the substance of every believer. Accordingly, the Commission requires us *first* to make disciples, *then* to baptize them, and *then* to teach them all Christ's commands. (Matt. 28 : 19, 20.) And the obligation to make a baptismal profession of faith, binds every disciple of Jesus. Hence Paul says to Christians : "Ye are *all the children of God* by faith in Christ Jesus ; for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have *put on Christ*." (Gal. 3 : 26, 27.) That is, by *faith in Christ Jesus*, they became the children of God ; and by *baptism on a profession of that faith*, they formally and publicly put on Christ. And this baptismal profession of faith binds us to *perpetual obedience* to Christ, as "the Captain of our salvation." This indeed is the great reason why baptism is to be performed but once, and that at the beginning of our Christian course.

Thus baptism is, in effect, the *Oath of allegiance to Christ*, and hence its obligations cover the whole life.

It is a formal *pledge* of a life of holy obedience, and it furnishes both a reason and a motive to abstain from all appearance of evil, and to patiently persevere in well-doing through grace to glory. Baptism also draws a *visible line* of separation between the righteous and the wicked, and then turns the *current* of our influence in favor of Christ and his cause. The world so understand the act. While the believer neglects a baptismal profession of faith, men of the world claim him ; but when he puts on Christ by baptism, immediately the world regard him as belonging to Christ, and treat him accordingly. In short, baptism is the *boundary-line* of visible Christianity, and gives *visibility* to faith. By this solemn ceremony, the believer is, as it were, *buried out of* the kingdom of Satan, and *raised up into* the visible kingdom of Christ, to walk in newness of life. Hence we see that Baptism is the appointed Ceremony of Christian profession, and the Oath of allegiance to Christ.

7. *Baptism is the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

This is expressly declared in 1 Peter 3 : 21 : “ The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” This passage contains an *analogy*. As the ark saved Noah and his family *by* water, so baptism saves us *by* the resurrection of Jesus Christ ; and as Noah’s temporal salvation in the ark by water was a *figure* or *type* of spiritual salvation through faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior,

so baptism is a "*like figure*" of the same salvation. (See 1 Peter 3 : 18-21.) As our burial in baptism implies our previous death to sin, so Christ's burial in the sepulchre implied his previous death for sin; therefore the former is said to be in the "*likeness*" of the latter, and our rising again from the waters of baptism to walk in newness of life, is said to be "*like*" his rising again from the dead to live unto God. (See Rom. 6 : 3-11.)

Now, this simple view of the passage prepares us to understand Peter. As Noah's entrance into the ark out of the old world *typified* Christ's passage out of this world into the grave, and as Noah's emergence from the ark into the new world *typified* Christ's emergence from the tomb to die no more, it was a striking *figure* of salvation by faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior; and Noah apprehending Christ in this figure, "became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." (Rom. 11 : 7.) So baptism, in its figurative import, *symbolizes* the same great truths, and hence is a "*like figure*" of salvation by faith in the same Savior. In this sense then, and no other, "baptism doth also now save us, *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*;" of which resurrection baptism is an imperishable *symbolic* monument.

We come now to inquire *how* we obtain "a good conscience." Certainly not by or in baptism, which is merely the "*answer* of a good conscience toward God." As has been shown, the conscience is made good, or "*purged* from dead works to serve the living God," *by faith in the blood of Christ*, "who was delivered for

our offenses, and raised again for our justification." (Rom. 4: 25.) The conscience being thus cleansed from guilt and made pure, *answers* or *responds* to the Divine claims by baptism, in which we formally assume certain obligations and symbolically declare certain facts. "Therefore," says Paul, "we are buried with Christ by baptism into death; that *like as he was raised up from the dead* by the glory of the Father, *even so we also should walk in newness of life.*" (Rom. 6: 4.)

And this view of the passage perfectly accords with the meaning of the original word here rendered "answer." According to DONNEGAN, GREENFIELD, ROBINSON, LIDDELL and SCOTT, and all standard Lexicographers, *Eperotema* means "an answer to a question, an engagement, promise, profession," etc. In submitting to baptism, the question naturally presents itself to the mind of every intelligent believer: "Will you, by being buried with Christ by baptism into death, and raised in the likeness of his resurrection, solemnly *obligate* yourself to walk in newness of life?" And the candidate, having a conscience "*purged* from dead works to serve the living God," by the very act of submitting to the ordinance answers, "*I will.*" Thus baptism is the "*answer* of a good conscience toward God;" and thus it saves us *in figure*, because it is, like Noah's salvation in the ark, *typical* of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; while it is the appointed act by and in which we formally *respond* to the claims of God, *promise* to live a new life, and *profess* to have "a good conscience toward God." (See Williams' *Expos. of Campbellism*, pp. 319-328.)

Such; then, are some of the *Practical Uses of Baptism*: 1. It is a formal and solemn profession of faith in and subjection to the Holy Trinity; 2. It is a formal and public induction into the visible kingdom of Christ on earth; 3. It is a symbolic declaration of the remission of sins, previously obtained through faith in Christ; 4. It is an emblematic washing away of sins, already obtained by faith in the blood of Christ; 5. It is a symbolic representation of Christ's burial and resurrection and of our union with him in them by faith; 6. It is the appointed ceremony of Christian profession, and oath of allegiance to Christ; and 7. It is the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

#### PRACTICAL DEDUCTIONS.

From the whole subject we learn,

1. *That baptism is an ordinance of great practical importance.* It is no unmeaning ceremony. Nor is it a non-essential for the purposes for which it was instituted. Baptism is an ordinance of *the New Testament*, ordained by JESUS CHRIST; and it is enforced by the positive command and holy example of the Lord of lords and King of kings. It is the most impressive and significant of all ordinances. While its *action* implies the death of Christ for sin, and symbolizes his burial and resurrection, together with our death to sin, burial and resurrection to newness of life by faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, its *element* symbolizes that cleansing from sin which we actually experience through faith in the blood of atonement. In this

solemn and significant ordinance, we are symbolically buried out of the kingdom of Satan, and raised into the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Thus we make an open and practical profession of our faith, "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Therefore, the apostle adds: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised." (Heb. 10: 22, 23.) Hence baptism rightly performed, is properly received but once for all life, and that at the beginning of our Christian course. And hence we see its binding force upon every believer in Christ, and its practical importance, as the pledge of a life of holy obedience.

## 2. *The scriptural relation of baptism to salvation.*

Baptism is an important Christian duty and essential to complete Christian obedience, but it is not essential to salvation as a means to an end, like repentance, faith, and prayer. *True*, no man can be saved without the *spirit* of universal obedience to Christ, nor is any man a fit subject for baptism who is destitute of this spirit. He must have it in his heart to obey Christ as he directs in all things. And where a man possesses this spirit, he only needs a knowledge of his duty and the opportunity to do it, in order to obey the Savior. And where this spirit or will exists, and the knowledge or opportunity is wanting, the will is taken for the deed, on the principle that "God prefers mercy to sacrifice." (Matt. 12: 7.) But this could not be true in regard to baptism, if it were a condition or means of salvation, like repentance and faith; *as it is written:*

“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13 : 3) ; and “he that believeth not, shall be damned.” (Mark 16 : 16.) God will not take the will for the deed in the case of repentance and faith, for they are moral duties and must be performed.

3. *The scriptural qualifications for baptism and church-membership.*

Faith is often spoken of in the Scriptures as the only qualification for baptism, as in our text ; because it necessarily implies and includes all other qualifications. As we have shown, faith implies repentance and prayer, and includes belief, confidence, reliance, submission and trust, together with the *conscious evidences* of its own existence in the heart ; as love, joy, peace, and the spirit of obedience.

Now, baptism on a credible profession of faith is an indispensable qualification for church-membership. On this point the Scriptures are plain. And all denominations agree in theory on this subject. Even infants are sprinkled on the faith of one or both parents, preparatory to membership in Pedobaptist churches.

4. *That all candidates for baptism should be previously instructed.*

No person should be baptized without understanding the *practical uses* of the ordinance. The young especially need instruction on this subject. It prepares them for submitting to the ordinance intelligently and joyfully. Many young converts lose the benefits and comforts of baptism, in consequence of not understanding its practical uses.

An intelligent observance of the ordinance always

brings its own blessedness to believers. We learn from sweet experience that Christ's yoke is easy and his burden light, and that his commandments are not grievous but joyous. Thus the Ethiopian eunuch "came up out of the water, and went on his way *re-joicing*." (Acts 8 : 39.) And thus the Philippian jailer "was baptized, he and all his straightway, and *rejoiced*, believing in God with all his house." (Acts 16 : 33, 34.) Truly, "baptism is the *answer* of a good conscience toward God."

5. *The great reason why the Baptists practice church communion.*

Except a fragment of *loose* communion Baptists and the Quakers, all denominations hold that *valid* baptism is an indispensable pre-requisite to church-membership and to communion at the Lord's Table. And all *practically* admit that our baptism is valid, and that our churches are Gospel churches. Hence they can consistently invite us to their communion tables. But we can never reciprocate the courtesy; for we deny that either sprinkling or pouring, or even immersion performed by unauthorized men and for an unscriptural design, is baptism at all. Hence we can not invite Pedobaptists and Campbellites to the Lord's Table in our churches; for they themselves maintain that the unbaptized have no scriptural right to partake of the ordinance in any church. It is not "close communion," therefore, but *close baptism* and *church communion* that we practice. They can remove the barriers to inter-communion without the sacrifice of truth,

by adopting our baptism and our church polity. And will they do it?

6. *The duty of all converts in regard to baptism.*

The very fact that good men differ as to the mode, subjects, design and administrator of baptism, makes it necessary that every convert should examine the New Testament on the subject for himself. The Old Testament has nothing whatever to do with the settlement of this question; for all admit that "baptism is an ordinance of the *New Testament*, instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ. (See *Methodist Discipline*, Arts. of Religion 16; and *Presbyterian Confession of Faith*, chap. 28, sec. 1.) And where else should the disciples of Christ go to learn their duty but to his unerring Word? To all his disciples Jesus says: "Take my yoke upon you, *and learn of me*; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall *find rest unto your souls*." (Matt. 11: 29.) Let every convert, therefore, go to the New Testament with a meek and lowly heart, and there learn from Jesus *what baptism is*, and then follow CHRIST in his appointed way, instead of following misguided parents and preachers. Thus all will obtain valid baptism, and enjoy the answer of a good conscience toward God in obeying the ordinance.

For the convenience of young converts, we append a reference to *all the passages on Baptism in the New Testament*, with the request to read them prayerfully in their connections; inserting first *sprinkle*, and then *immerse*, where the word baptize occurs, and see which makes the better sense.

Matthew 3 : 5-17 inclusive.	Acts 10 : 37, 47, 48.
Matthew 20 : 22, 23.	Acts 11 : 16, 18.
Matthew 21 : 25.	Acts 13 : 24.
Matthew 28 : 18, 19, 20.	Acts 16 : 14, 15, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34.
Mark 1 : 4-11 inclusive.	Acts 18 : 8, 25.
Mark 10 : 38, 39.	Acts 19 : 3, 4, 5.
Mark 11 : 30.	Acts 22 : 16.
Mark 16 : 15, 16.	Romans 6 : 2, 3, 4, 5.
Luke 3 : 3, 7, 8, 12, 16, 21, 22.	1 Corinthians 1 : 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.
Luke 7 : 29, 30.	1 Corinthians 10 : 1, 2.
Luke 12 : 50.	1 Corinthians 12 : 13.
Luke 20 : 4.	1 Corinthians 15 : 29.
John 1 : 25, 26, 31, 32, 33, 34.	Galatians 3 : 26, 27.
John 3 : 22, 23, 26.	Ephesians 4 : 5.
John 4 : 1, 2.	Colossians 2 : 12.
John 10 : 40.	Hebrews 6 : 2.
Acts 2 : 37, 38, 41, 47.	Hebrews 10 : 22.
Acts 8 : 12, 13, 16, 36, 37, 38, 39.	1 Peter 3 : 20, 21.
Acts 9 : 17, 18.	

N. B.—Remember that baptism is a *positive* ordinance, established by *positive* law, and hence it must be scriptural in its *Mode, Subject, Design, and Administrator*, or it is not valid baptism. No substitute will answer for a positive ordinance ; it must be right and scriptural. And there is but *one baptism*, let that be what it may. If it is *immersion*, it is nothing else.

# MISSILES OF TRUTH.

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## MISSILE NO. II.

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### ADMINISTRATOR OF BAPTISM.

NOTE.—The substance of the following Missile was preached to the Russellville Baptist Church, of which the author was then Pastor, in February 1869, and requested for publication by a number of brethren. It was at once prepared as an introduction to the author's work on CHURCH COMMUNION, then ready for stereotyping, but by the advice of discreet friends, its publication was postponed, lest it might divert attention from the Communion question. Since that time, many judicious brethren have urged its publication, believing that it would be a means of permanent good, and in compliance with the repeated requests of these brethren, the work has recently been revised and expanded, and is now offered to the public.

BAPTISM, like the Lord's Supper, is a *positive ordinance*, established by *positive law*; and as such, it must be administered in the *exact manner*, and to the *precise subjects*, and for the *specific design*, and by the *very persons* required by the Lord Jesus Christ, or it is not scriptural and valid. This was true of the positive rites of the old dispensation, as for instance, the *Passover* and *Circumcision*, and it is equally true of Baptism

and the Supper under the new. To alter or change a positive ordinance in any one of these particulars, is to destroy its validity and insult the Law-giver in Zion. In proof of this, see "CHURCH COMMUNION," pp. 25-30.

In this *MISSILE*, however, it is merely assumed that *four things*, at least, are essential to valid Baptism, viz: 1st. *A Scriptural Action*; 2d. *A Scriptural Subject*; 3d. *A Scriptural Design*; and 4th. *A Scriptural Administrator*; while we shall endeavor to show—WHO IS A SCRIPTURAL ADMINISTRATOR OF BAPTISM. And here, as in every thing else pertaining to the ordinance, THE NEW TESTAMENT is our sole authority, and must settle this vexed question. Whatever the Lord Jesus Christ in person or by his inspired Apostles enjoined and practiced on this subject, is binding upon us as a religious duty, and nothing else is binding, or even allowable. Then, "*to the law and to the testimony*" we must appeal. What saith the Scriptures on this point? We inquire,

#### I. TO WHOM CHRIST HAS GIVEN THE AUTHORITY TO BAPTIZE.

Now, he must have given it either to his *Disciples* as such, or to his *Ministers* as such, or to his *Churches* as such; for both reason and Scripture teach that an Administrator of some kind is essential to the validity of baptism; no one can properly baptize himself, as all admit. To WHOM, then, has Christ given the *Authority* to administer the ordinance? We answer,

1. *That He first authorized John the Baptist to baptize.*

Baptism is confessedly an ordinance of the New Testament, instituted by Jesus Christ. It was not borrowed from what is called "*proselyte baptism*," but was a *new* institution, wholly unknown as a religious rite until introduced by John the Baptist. There is no reliable evidence either from Scripture or History, that proselyte baptism was ever practiced among the Jews *previous* to the days of John. In answer to the question: "Was the baptism of John, or that of the Christian Church, in any way derived from, or connected with, the baptism of proselytes?" DR WILLIAM SMITH, of London, remarks: "There is no *direct* evidence of the practice being in use *before* the destruction of Jerusalem. . . . At all events there is no record of such a rite, conducted in the name of, and with reference to a particular person, before the ministry of John." (See *New Test. History*, pp. 150, 200, 201.) It is a mere assumption. Baptism as a religious rite, then, commenced with John the Baptist, and is peculiar to the Gospel dispensation. It was "*from heaven*, and not of men;" and was ordained by Jesus Christ.

Accordingly, DR. C. H. TOY, Professor in the "Southern Baptist Theological Seminary," in a learned article on "JEWISH PROSELYTE BAPTISM," says: "We have seen that there is no trace of it in the interbiblical literature, in the New Testament, in Philo and Josephus, or even in the Mishna. . . . Our investigation, then, shows that there is positively no evidence of the existence of proselyte baptism before the destruction of Jerusalem, and that the negative evidence against

it up to that time, is as decisive as negative evidence can be ; that there are no clear proofs of its existence before the fifth century, while it is possible that it may have been gradually coming into use for a century or two ; that there are reasons why the Jews should have been led to adopt some such ceremony after the destruction of Jerusalem ; that the form is such as their national observances would suggest ; and that the way in which this rite is mentioned, is just what we would expect on the supposition that it came into use first about the third century, gradually gaining ground till, in the fifth century, it was firmly established. From these results we conclude that the Christian rite of baptism has no connection with the Jewish initiatory immersion of proselytes." (See *Baptist Quarterly* for July, 1872, pp. 328, 331, 332.)

Accordingly, John's ministry is denominated—" *The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*" (Mark 1 : 1.) And we are expressly told that John was " *sent from God*" to bear witness of Christ, "that all men through Him might believe" (John 1 : 6, 7) ; and also " *to baptize*" penitent believers on a profession of their faith in the coming Messiah. (John 1 : 33.) Hence Paul says : "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him who should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." (Acts 19 : 4.) It is evident, therefore, that John was the first *authorized* administrator of baptism, and that he acted under divine appointment.

Now John was not only the first, but the *only* au-

thorized administrator of the ordinance at this time. And he received his authority *directly from the Lord Jesus Christ*, into whose hands the Father had given "all things" as Mediator. (See Matt. 28:18; John 3:35; 13:3.) This view of the subject perfectly accords with the prophecy of Malachi in reference to John the Baptist. Christ, speaking by the Prophet, said: "Behold, I send *my* messenger, and he shall prepare the way before ME," etc. (Mal. 3:1.) Here the person sending is the person whose way is prepared before him; that is, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. (See Luke 1:16.) John then acted by the appointment and baptized by the authority of Christ himself, and hence his baptism was *Christian* baptism. He received both his call to preach and his commission to baptize from heaven.

John employed no assistants to baptize for him, for he alone was now authorized to administer the ordinance. The Jews and Jesus himself so understood it, and hence they came to *John* and demanded baptism at *his* hands. As it is written: "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, *and were baptized of him in Jordan*, confessing their sins." (Matt. 3:5, 6.) "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, *to be baptized of him*," (Matt. 3:13,) "*and was baptized of John in Jordan*." (Mark 1:9.) This shows clearly that John was now the *only* authorized administrator of baptism, and therefore they all went to *him* for baptism. They were not at liberty to employ his disciples nor any

other persons, but must receive the ordinance at his hands.

Hence we see that Christ first authorized John to baptize penitent believers, and that he was the *first* and *only* authorized administrator of the ordinance until Jesus himself was baptized and entered upon his public ministry.

2. *Christ next authorized his chosen disciples to baptize for him as his agents.*

The Evangelist thus records this fact: "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them and *baptized*. And John also was baptizing in Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they came and were baptized. For John was not yet cast in prison. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John and said to him: Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same *baptizeth*, and all men come to him." (John 3: 22-26.) "When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) He left Judea, and departed into Galilee." (John 4: 1-3.) This is about all that we know of our Lord's baptizing. And here we may observe that Jesus first *made* disciples, and then *baptized* them.

Now, we should not have known but Christ baptized *in person*, as did John the Baptist, had it not been added—"Though Jesus himself baptized not, but

*his disciples.*" (John 4: 2.) That these disciples administered the ordinance *by the authority of Christ* is evident from the fact that *their* act was regarded as *His* act—showing that they officiated as *His agents*: just as our Government administers the oath of allegiance to aliens by its authorized agents. And this was at the very commencement of our Lord's ministry, *before* he sent out "the twelve" and "other seventy" to preach and work miracles among the lost sheep of the house of Israel; though Andrew and Peter, James and John, Philip and others had been called to become "*fishers of men*," and were *disciples* under Jesus, *preparatory* to preaching the Gospel, first among the Jews, and then in all the world. (See Matt. 4: 18-22; John 1: 37-49.)

And it is worthy of remark here, that during the whole of Christ's personal ministry on earth, we have no account of any of his disciples baptizing a single convert, except by his special appointment and under his immediate supervision. When "*the twelve*" were sent out on their first missionary tour, *baptizing* was no part of their prescribed duty. (See Matt. 10: 1-15; Mark 3: 13-15; 6: 7-13.) And the same was true of the "*other seventy*," afterwards sent forth by Jesus to preach and teach "in every city and place whither he himself would come." (See Luke 10: 1-16.) Thus, our blessed Lord, as the *executive* in his own kingdom while on earth, reserved to himself the *sole right* of approving and *baptizing* all converts, whether made by himself or his chosen disciples.

Yet we are expressly told that "Jesus himself bap-

tized not, *but his disciples*" officiated as his *authorized agents*. That is, he appointed certain disciples to administer the ordinance *for him* under his immediate direction and control; doubtless his *chosen Apostles and Evangelists*, or those whom he had called and was qualifying to become such. Hence *their act* was styled *His act*, just as a Baptist church is said to baptize *by her pastor*.

Thus we see that, next to John the Baptist, *Jesus authorized his chosen disciples to baptize for him*, under his personal inspection. And as there is no intimation that Christ gave this authority to *all* his disciples, *as such*, and as he had previously called *certain disciples* to follow him and receive instruction and training *preparatory* to the ministry, the inference is legitimate, if not irresistible, that Jesus baptized *only by these chosen disciples*. There is no evidence to the contrary, and all the circumstances and facts taken together, justify, if not require this conclusion. Be this as it may, however, one thing is certain, that these disciples administered baptism by *Christ's special appointment* and as *his authorized agents*, and not merely by virtue of being his disciples. On no other supposition could it be true that *their* administration of the ordinance was *His act*.

Accordingly says DR. DAGG: "When he (Christ) baptized disciples, he put the work into the hands of those who were afterward to perform it." (*Church Order*, p. 261.) And DR. SMITH adds: "Enough had passed to designate these first disciples for their future ministry, *especially when they baptized Christ's converts*,

and when he spoke to them of their part in the coming spiritual harvest." (*New Test. History*, p. 235.)

3. *At length, Christ fully authorized his "eleven disciples" to baptize in all the world.*

This was at the close of our Lord's personal ministry on earth. Hitherto he had authorized these disciples to administer the ordinance only *for him* as his agents, and that in his immediate presence and under his personal supervision. But now he is about to ascend up where he was before, and therefore he extended their commission to all the world, and fully authorized them to act in this and all other respects as his *plenipotentiaries* on earth. Matthew records the fact thus: "Then the *eleven disciples* went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshiped him; but some (probably of his other disciples present) doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying: All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and teach (or disciple) all nations, *baptizing* them in (*eis* into) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," etc. (Matt. 28: 16-20.)

Now, whether there were other disciples present on that occasion or not, we are not expressly informed, but one thing is positively certain, that this world-wide Commission of Christ, containing the authority and command to *baptize*, was given directly and exclusively to the "*eleven Disciples*" as his chosen Apostles. The language of Matthew admits of no other construction. Mark and Luke also record a similar meeting elsewhere on a previous occasion, and restrict

the Commission to "*the eleven*," as does Matthew on this occasion. (See Mark 16 : 11-16 ; Luke 24 : 33-49.) Nor do Matthias and Paul, who afterward became Apostles, constitute exceptions to this position. The Church (See Acts 1 : 15 ; 2 : 41-47) that elected Matthias to the Apostleship, was fully competent to authorize him to *baptize disciples*. And we are expressly informed that Paul received his call and commission to *preach* directly from THE LORD JESUS CHRIST (See Acts 20 : 24 ; 26 : 15-18 ; 1 Cor. 1 : 13-17 ; Gal. 1 : 15-17) ; and that he received his authority to *baptize* from the Church at Antioch through ordination. (See Acts 13 : 1-3.) We have no account of his baptizing any one previous to this time, although he had been preparing and preaching several years. Paul's appointment to the Apostleship, therefore, differed from that of "the twelve" only in manner and time, and not in any thing essential to its validity.

But this final Commission of Christ was given to the Apostles, not as disciples, nor as a Church, neither as ministers merely, but *as the inspired founders and instructors of the Churches for all time*. It was given to them *for the Churches*, and not for the ministry as such, and hence it is binding upon the Churches as the *executives* in Christ's kingdom to the end of time ; as is evident from the subjoined promise of our Lord : "*And lo ! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*" (Matt. 28 : 20.) Now, the duties enjoined by the Commission were threefold, viz : 1st. To make disciples by preaching and teaching ; 2d. To baptize those and only those who made a credible profession of faith in Christ ;

and 3d. To teach such baptized believers to "observe all things whatsoever" Jesus had commanded them; among which things was the duty of organizing themselves into churches, for the execution of his laws and the observance of his ordinances. Accordingly, says DR. DAGG: "The institution of local churches has divine authority, and ought to be respected by every disciple of Christ. It is the duty of every one to become a member of some local church, and walk with the other members in love and Christian obedience.

. . . The Head of the Church designed that the ministers of the word should make disciples, baptize them, and teach them to *organize churches*, to celebrate the Lord's Supper, exercise discipline, and walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord." (See *Church Order*, chap. 8, sects. 1 and 3, pp. 250, 260.)

The Apostles were the *plenipotentiaries* or *representatives* of Christ on earth: "*As thou hast sent me into the world,*" said Jesus to his Father, "*even so have I sent them into the world.*" (John 17: 18.) And as such, they had the special promise of the Father, repeated by the Son, that they should receive the plenary inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to bring to their remembrance all things whatsoever Christ had said unto them, to guide them into all truth, and to show them things to come. (See John 14: 16, 26; 16: 13, etc.) And they were expressly forbidden to enter upon their great and responsible work, until they were fully endued with power from on high by the Holy Spirit. (See Luke 24: 49.) The Apostles thus commissioned and thus inspired, "went forth and preached every-where, the

Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." (Mark 16 : 20.)

Considered merely as ministers, the work of the Apostles was identical with that of other ministers of Christ ; but considered as *Apostles*, their work was peculiar, and hence required peculiar gifts. These extraordinary gifts ceased with the Apostolic age, because no longer necessary ; while the ordinary gifts of evangelists, pastors and teachers, exhorters, helps, etc., continue in the churches. From the very nature of the case, therefore, the Apostles, *as such*, could have no successors in their high office. No man could enter that office unless he had seen Jesus Christ, and possessed the gifts of inspiration, miracles, prophecy, and tongues ; gifts which none have possessed since the days of the Apostles. For any uninspired man, therefore, to claim to be a successor of the Apostles, is the most daring presumption. It is passing strange that intelligent people will admit such arrogant claims, and bow in submission to such ghostly usurpers.

Hence we see that the last Commission of Christ, containing the authority and command *to baptize*, was given to the Apostles, not as disciples, nor as a church, neither as ministers merely, but *as the inspired founders and instructors of the churches to the end of the world* ; and that it was given to them *for the churches*. Accordingly, the Apostles were fully authorized to *make and baptize disciples* every-where, to gather them into churches, and to act in all respects as the *plenipotentiaries* of the Lord Jesus Christ in his kingdom on earth.

4. Finally, Christ gave the Authority to baptize to his Churches as such, through his inspired Apostles.

The youthful bride of Christ, "prepared and made ready" for his reception by John the Baptist, was presented to her royal bridegroom soon after his formal induction into his kingdom by baptism, and when he was publicly owned by his Father as his beloved Son, and anointed with the Holy Spirit for his Mediatorial work, constituting his ordination to the ministry. (See Matt. 3: 13-17; Luke 1: 17; John 1: 29-34.) The princely Bridegroom affectionately received his virgin bride, as thus made ready and presented to him by his happy groomsman. And here and now *the first Gospel church in embryo* appears in the visible kingdom of Christ. Accordingly, John said to his complaining disciples: "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but am sent before him. *He that hath the bride is the bridegroom*; but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled." (John 3: 28, 29.)

Accordingly, DR. J. R. GRAVES remarks: "The first commission to preach the Gospel was given to John the Baptist. Though unbaptized and unordained, he was authorized to preach and to baptize in water those who cordially believed his teachings and gave him satisfactory evidence of true repentance, and thus he made ready a people prepared for the Lord. This people, as material, Christ received and organized into a church. John's was a special commission, and expired with him." (See *The Baptist* of June 11th, 1870.)

But while Jesus was yet with his young and growing bride, he retained all *administrative* and *executive* power in his own hands. Hence, while he enacted laws, established ordinances, ordained ministers, and taught the fundamental principles of church discipline, formative and corrective, still he himself was the *sole executive* in his kingdom. But when he ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, then his bride or first church (see Acts 1: 12-15) began to act as the *executive* in his kingdom on earth; and as such, elected and ordained an Apostle to fill the place of Judas Iscariot. (Acts 1: 16-26.) And it was to this *model church*, gathered by Christ himself, that the baptized thousands were “*added*” on and after the Day of Pentecost.” (See Acts 2: 41-47; 4: 4.)

The Apostles being endued with power from on high, commenced acting under this great Commission of Christ. And Peter, to whom the “*keys*” of the kingdom had been given, now fully opened the door of faith, first to the *Jews* (Acts 2: 14-40), and then to the *Gentiles*. (Acts 10: 34-48.) This, however, gave him no power or pre-eminence over the other Apostles; he was merely their *organ* of communication. Thus, “beginning at Jerusalem,” they went forth into all the world, preaching the Gospel to every creature, *baptizing disciples*, and gathering them into churches; teaching them to “observe all things whatsoever” Jesus had commanded them. And these churches, like the *model church*, were composed exclusively of baptized believers, voluntarily associated together in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the or-

dinances of Christ ; governed by his laws ; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges vested in them by his word ; with Bishops or Pastors and Deacons as their only permanent officers. Each church was sovereign and independent, subject only to Christ as its Head and Lawgiver.

Now, to these *churches as such*, and to them *alone*, did the Apostles commit the laws and ordinances of Christ's kingdom for execution and observance. And this was in perfect accordance with the previous instructions of Jesus as given in Matt. 18 : 15-20, where he expressly teaches that in all matters of discipline the ultimate appeal is to "*the church*," whose decision is final. The Apostles so understood the Savior, and instructed the churches accordingly. Unlike modern lords over God's heritage, they acknowledged themselves the *servants* of the churches for Jesus' sake (2 Cor. 4 : 5), and bowed with cheerful submission to church sovereignty. *For instance*, Paul instead of taking discipline into his own hands, directed the church at Corinth to excommunicate the incestuous man (1 Cor. 5 : 1-5) ; and when he had repented of his sins, the apostle exhorted the church to forgive and restore him to her fellowship. (2 Cor. 2 : 6-8.) The same was true of all the apostolic churches, as it is of all Baptist churches.

Thus the *sole power* of discipline, formative and corrective, was vested in the churches as the *permanent executives* in Christ's kingdom on earth ; and hence the Savior himself commended the church at Ephesus for exercising this right. (See Rev. 2 : 2.) Not even

the apostles ever dared to usurp this church prerogative. In short, then, all government was left by the apostles in the hands of the churches as such, and each church constituted an independent little sovereignty in the visible kingdom of Christ, subject only to Him and his laws.

The same is equally true of the *ordinances* of the Gospel. As has been shown, our Lord entrusted his laws and ordinances to his apostles *for the churches*, and the apostles delivered these laws and ordinances to the several churches *as they had received them from the Savior*. Accordingly, Paul said to the church at Corinth: "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and *keep the ordinances* (Marg. *traditions*, including both *doctrines* and *ordinances*) *as I delivered them to you. . . . For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you,*" etc. (1 Cor. 11: 2, 23, etc.) And what was true of this church was equally true of all the churches—"as I teach every-where in every church," adds the apostle. (1 Cor. 4: 17.) Thus Christ by his apostles committed the *laws* and *ordinances* of the Gospel to the several churches and their successors as "*the ground and pillar of the truth*" (1 Tim. 3: 15), and as the *permanent executives* in his kingdom on earth.

Accordingly, DR. H. G. WESTON, President of Crozer Theological Seminary, Pa., says: "*The ordinances belong to the Church*, not to the Ministry. This has long seemed to me the plain teaching of the New Testament, and the only ground on which Baptists can consistently stand. When this position is established

and clearly understood, right views of the church, of the ordinances, of the ministry, and of church order will follow. One of the fundamental errors of other denominations is the exaltation of officers and individuals to a place entirely inconsistent with the idea of a New Testament church; and just so far as we adopt this error our practice will be wrong, or if right will be inconsistent with our theory. The ordinances are a sacred trust committed to the keeping of the church." (See *The Baptist* of June 11th, 1870.)

Hence we see that the *churches as such*, and not the ministry or session, are charged with the enforcement of Christ's laws and the administration of his ordinances. To each particular church, *as such*, belongs the exclusive right to approve and baptize all applicants for membership. Nor does the New Testament furnish a single example of valid baptism which was not administered either by the direct authority of Jesus Christ, or by that of a Gospel church—not one. As we have shown, John the Baptist was authorized and sent by Christ himself, to baptize penitent believers, and hence John's baptism was recognized as valid by the Savior, but John had no right to authorize his disciples to administer the ordinance. And this, in fact, was the *radical defect* in the baptism of "*certain disciples*" at Ephesus, (Acts 19: 1-7), who were re-immersed on a profession of their faith, after Paul had properly instructed them in regard to John's preaching and baptism; they having been immersed by some *unauthorized* disciple of John—probably Apollos. (See Acts 18: 24-28.)

When, therefore, a minister of the Gospel administers baptism, he does it by the *authority* of the church that ordained him, and hence it is in fact the church baptizing *by its authorized agent or servant*; just as Jesus baptized by his authorized disciples. (See John 4: 2.) And so, when evangelists or missionaries approve and baptize disciples among the destitute or the heathen, they act *for* the churches as their authorized agents or servants; and therefore they are properly held amenable to the churches for their official acts. Thus, as Christ by his appointed agents baptized all disciples while on earth, so his churches by their appointed agents baptize all converts now. Accordingly, the late DR. JOHN L. WALLER says: "It is nowhere in the Scriptures made the duty of ministers as such to give the rite of baptism. To the churches are committed the keys; they can open, and none can shut; they can shut, and none can open. The churches are the highest authority under Christ. They are not dependent on the ministry for existence; but the ministry upon the churches." (See *Western Recorder*, of Nov. 25th, 1857.) And DR. J. B. JETER, senior editor of the "*Religious Herald*," remarks: "*To his Church, Christ has committed the ordinances—baptism with the rest.* 1 Cor. 11: 2. . If baptism is to be kept as it was delivered to the church, then it can not be properly administered but *by her authority*. Those whom God appoints to the ministry, he inclines the church to separate for the work to which they are called. Acts 13: 2." (See *Religious Herald*, of Oct. 5th, 1871.)

In this sense, then, and no other, is baptism a church

*ordinance*, and so far as its administration is concerned, it belongs to the *churches as such* and to them alone. The Lord's Supper is a *church* ordinance, to be celebrated in each particular church by its members collectively ; while baptism is a *church* ordinance, to be administered *outside* of any church, by a properly *authorized agent* of a church ; and both ordinances equally belong to the churches, and are subject to their exclusive administration and control. It is evident, therefore, that the *authority to baptize* was given finally by Christ, through his apostles, *to the churches as such* ; and that it now belongs to them alone as the *sole executives* in his kingdom on earth.

Hence we learn—To WHOM Christ has given the *authority to baptize* : 1st. He authorized *John the Baptist* to administer the ordinance ; 2d. He next authorized his *chosen disciples* to baptize for Him ; 3d. He at length fully authorized his “*eleven disciples*” to baptize in all the world ; and 4th. He finally gave the authority to baptize *to his churches as such*, through his inspired apostles, to whom alone it scripturally belongs as the *permanent executives* in his kingdom ; while the churches administer the ordinance by their *authorized agents*.

Having shown that the authority to baptize is vested in the churches as such, we proceed to inquire,

## II. WHETHER THE SCRIPTURES REQUIRE AN AUTHORIZED ADMINISTRATOR OF BAPTISM.

And here a primary question claims our attention : Do the Scriptures require *any* administrator ? If they

do not, then every convert may lawfully *baptize himself*, and such baptism would be valid. If all that is required be merely the immersion of a believer in water into the name of the Holy Trinity, no matter how or by whom, then there is no necessity for an administrator at all. Indeed, if baptism be simply an individual duty, like repentance or faith, it would be more properly *self-administered*; for no one, save a Pedobaptist sponsor, would pretend to exercise faith for another, or make it dependent upon a second person. It was this view of the subject which gave rise to the defunct sect of *Se-Baptists* in England early in the seventeenth century, who maintained that it was lawful and proper for every believer to immerse himself. But *self-baptism* is condemned both by reason and Scripture, and hence repudiated by all denominations; for all hold that an administrator of some kind is essential to valid baptism.

Now, that the Scriptures do require an administrator of baptism will appear from the following considerations; 1st. The very command "*to be baptized*" necessarily implies an administrator. The candidate merely *submits* to the ordinance at the hands of another; and if he or she can not find a proper administrator, the obligation "*to be baptized*" ceases until one can be found. 2d. The duty *to baptize* is expressly enjoined upon the *administrator*. Thus John the Baptist was specially "*sent to baptize*" (John 1: 33); and both the Jews and Jesus so understood it. Hence they demanded baptism at *his* hands alone. During our Lord's personal ministry, as we have seen, he em-

ployed his *chosen Disciples* to administer the ordinance *for him* in his immediate presence. And at the close of his ministry, He extended their commission to all the world, with the injunction to teach or disciple all nations, "*baptizing them*," etc. (Matt. 28 : 19.) Here the duty of baptizing is expressly enjoined upon the *administrators*. 3d. All the *recorded examples* of baptism confirm this position. In every case an administrator is either mentioned or clearly implied. This is true of all the baptisms recorded in the New Testament. The *baptism of Jesus* especially bears on this point. His baptism was designed as a *pattern* for all his followers (Matt. 3 : 15); and hence he submitted to the ordinance at the hands of his own authorized administrator. And during the whole of his public ministry, *Jesus himself acted as administrator*, through his authorized agents. (John 4 : 2.) 4th. The *symbolic import* of baptism presupposes and requires an administrator. Baptism is a symbol of Christ's *burial* and *resurrection*, implying his previous death for sin, and of our *burial* with him and *resurrection* to newness of life, implying our previous death to sin through faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior. (See Rom. 6 : 3-5; Col. 2 : 12.) But did Christ bury and raise himself? Or can a dead man bury and raise himself? The agency of another is necessarily implied. (See "*Christian Review*," No. 96, for April 1859, pp. 239-249.)

Having briefly shown (1.) from the command "*to be baptized*;" (2.) from the express injunction "*to baptize*;" (3.) from the *recorded examples* of baptism ;

and (4.) from the *symbolic import* of the ordinance, that an administrator of some kind is essential to the validity of baptism, we are now prepared to answer the question: *Whether the Scriptures require an authorized administrator.* If they do not, then any disciple of Christ, man, woman, or child, that has the physical strength, may *lawfully* baptize others; and no church or denomination has a divine right to restrict the administration of the ordinance to *ordained* ministers of the Gospel, as all do, except the Campbellites.

Hence every applicant for baptism and church-membership would be at perfect liberty to choose his own administrator, and to receive the ordinance at the hands of a private member, instead of the pastor, if he should prefer it. But what saith the Scripture on this subject? That the New Testament does require an *authorized* administrator of baptism is proved,

1. *From the appointment of John the Baptist to administer the ordinance.*

As we have shown, John was expressly sent "*to baptize*" penitent believers. He received his authority to baptize directly from the Lord Jesus Christ, into whose hand the Father had given "*all things*" pertaining to the Mediatorial kingdom. (See Matt. 28 : 18 ; John 3 : 35 ; 1 Cor. 15 : 25.) John was the first and only authorized administrator, until the Savior was baptized and anointed with the Holy Spirit. Hence it was that all who desired baptism went to *him*, and sought it at *his* hands only. Not even his disciples, some of whom afterwards became apostles, were allowed

to baptize, because Christ had not yet authorized any of them to administer the ordinance.

And this accounts for the fact that John himself was never baptized, though he felt his need of it (Matt. 3 : 14) ; he being the only authorized administrator at this time. Even Jesus, though the Author of the institution, was not yet qualified to baptize his servant. It is certain, therefore, that during John's ministry the right to baptize was restricted to an *authorized* administrator, and that such an administrator was essential to valid baptism. Hence we see that the appointment of John the Baptist to administer baptism, clearly proves that an authorized administrator is indispensable to the validity of the ordinance. This is proved,

2. *From the appointment of certain Disciples to baptize for the Savior as his agents.*

As we have seen, Jesus employed certain disciples as his *agents* or *substitutes* to baptize converts for him ; and they administered the ordinance by his authority, and under his immediate direction and control. Hence he was said to baptize them himself, because these disciples officiated as his *authorized agents*. (John 4 : 2.) But there is no evidence that Christ employed his disciples indiscriminately to baptize for him. There can be no reasonable doubt, that these administrators were those whom he had called and was qualifying to become his Apostles. (See pp. 5-7.) All things taken together justify, if not force the conclusion, that Jesus employed these chosen disciples to administer the ordinance for him during his entire ministry.

Now, these disciples of Christ were fully qualified to

act as administrators of baptism. 1st. They were *baptized disciples*. This is evident from various considerations. Most, if not all of them had been disciples of John, and, therefore, must have been baptized; for if they had neglected or refused his baptism, they would have "rejected the counsel of God against themselves," as did the Pharisees and lawyers (Luke 7 : 29, 30,) and thereby proved that they were not disciples at all. And if any of them became disciples under the ministry of Jesus, then it is certain that they were baptized, for "Jesus made *and baptized* more disciples than John." (John 4 : 1.) Besides, Christ had taught them by his own example, that baptism was a necessary part of all "righteousness;" and to have allowed any of his disciples to neglect this first duty, would have nullified the law of baptism which he himself had solemnly obeyed. 2d. These disciples had been *called to the ministry*, and were preparing for it under Jesus himself. (See Matt. 4 : 18-22; 9 : 9; John 1 : 35-51.) And as baptizing was to be a part of their official work, it was altogether proper that they should be employed in administering the ordinance now. 3d. These disciples baptized *by Christ's special appointment*. They were authorized directly by Him, and acted under his appointment. They did not administer the ordinance because *any* or *all* disciples had the right to baptize, but because Jesus had appointed *them* to act as his special agents. We have, then, a divine warrant for employing such authorized administrators; have we such a warrant for employing any others? Hence we see that the appointment of certain disciples to bap-

tize for the Savior, proves that an *authorized* administrator is essential to the validity of the ordinance. This is proved,

3. *From the re-appointment of the "eleven Apostles" to baptize among all nations.*

We have already shown, that the Commission of Christ was given to the Apostles, not as disciples, nor as a church, neither as ministers merely, but *as the inspired founders and instructors of the churches to the end of the world*; and that it was given to them *for the churches*. We have also shown, that the Apostles actually delivered the laws and ordinances of the kingdom to the several churches *as they had received them from Christ*; and that the *sole authority to baptize* now belongs *to the churches* as the permanent executives in Christ's visible kingdom on earth. And we have also shown, that no person has a divine right to administer baptism without authority directly from Christ, or from a church of Christ; and that the duty of baptizing is expressly enjoined upon those and only those who have received such authority; as had John the Baptist, the Apostles and Evangelists, and as have all regularly ordained Baptist ministers.

Now these last administrators appointed by the Savior were not only *baptized* and *called*, but also *regularly ordained* ministers of the Gospel (Mark 3: 14); for Matthew combines the duty of "*baptizing*" with that of "*teaching*." The Commission, then, authorizes none to baptize but *ordained ministers of the Gospel*, and are any Scripturally ordained except regular Baptist ministers? And the Commission is in perfect har-

mony with the practice of our blessed Lord. As he restricted the administration of baptism to those whom he himself appointed and authorized, so the commission restricts the right to baptize to those whom his churches shall appoint and authorize. Hence we see that the re-appointment of the "eleven Apostles" to baptize among all nations, clearly proves that an *authorized* administrator is essential to the validity of the ordinance. This is proved,

4. *From the recorded Examples of baptism in the New Testament.*

These examples show how inspired men interpreted the law of Christ in regard to the administrator of baptism, and hence are as authoritative on this subject as express precepts. But as we have already examined the baptisms administered by John and also by Jesus through his authorized disciples, previous to the giving of the Commission, we shall confine our attention at present to those administered on and after the Day of Pentecost. *Nine instances* of the administration of baptism are recorded in the New Testament after this period. In some of these cases we are not expressly told who the administrators were; but even in these the circumstances indicate them with sufficient clearness.

1st. The *first* example is that of the *Pentecostian converts*, Acts 2: 37-41. This occurred not long after the Apostles received the Commission, and it was the first administration of the ordinance under it. That Commission required them to "teach and baptize." Accordingly, "Peter standing up with the eleven," first

preached a crucified and exalted Savior, and then commanded the inquiring multitude to "REPENT," implying *faith*; directing "every one" of that multitude who obeyed the first injunction to "*be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.*" And with these requirements many complied promptly; for it is added: "*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized*; and the same day there were added unto them (i. e. unto the first Gospel church, Acts 1: 15; 2: 47) about three thousand souls." (Verse 41.) Now it is not said who baptized these rejoicing converts, but as the Apostles were expressly commissioned to make disciples *and baptize them*, the natural presumption is that they administered the ordinance themselves; and there is no evidence to the contrary. Certain it is that these converts were baptized either *by the Apostles* or by persons *authorized* by them to do it; and in either case the ordinance was valid.

2d. The *second* example was that of the *Samaritans*, Acts 8: 5-12. "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. . . . But *when they believed* Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, *they were baptized*, both men and women." It is not said here that Philip baptized these men and women, but it is obviously to be inferred; for there is no intimation that he employed any one to administer the ordinance for him. But who was this Philip? He was originally one of the seven

Deacons, but subsequently became an "*evangelist*." (Acts 21 : 8) ; a title which Paul applied to Timothy (2 Timothy 4 : 5), and which the Apostle employs to designate a distinct ministerial office in the church. (Eph. 4 : 11.) Philip was not only a Deacon, but also an *ordained Minister* of the Gospel ; for no man can enter the ministry without ordination by the authority of a Gospel church.

3d. The *third* example was that of the *Ethiopian eunuch*, Acts 8 : 36-40. Here it is expressly stated that Philip baptized the eunuch ; and we have just shown who Philip was. And it is a significant fact, that the eunuch immediately requested baptism *at the hands of Philip*. Had it been lawful for any and every pious person to administer the ordinance, he might and probably would have waited until he returned home, that his friends might have witnessed his baptism. But there was no authorized administrator there, and therefore he applied to Philip to baptize him.

4th. The *fourth* example of baptism was that of *Paul*, Acts 9 : 18. Here Ananias was unquestionably the administrator. Jesus appeared to him in a vision, and directed him to go and instruct the praying penitent, that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost (See verse 10-17) ; "and immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales ; and he received his sight forthwith, and arose, and *was baptized*." Ananias was a prominent "disciple," *authorized* by Christ himself to baptize Paul, and probably a regular minister of the Gospel.

5th. The *fifth* example of baptism is that of *Corne-*

*lius and his friends*, Acts 10 : 44-48. Peter says that "six brethren" accompanied him, some of whom no doubt were ordained ministers. As Peter himself did not baptize Cornelius and his friends, but simply "commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord," he must have employed one or more of these "*brethren*" to administer the ordinance for him, for there were no other persons present to do it. But whether they were ministers or not, one thing is certain, that they officiated by the authority of an inspired Apostle.

6th. The *sixth* example of baptism is that of *Lydia and her household*, Acts 16 : 14, 15. These were the first conversions and baptisms in Philippi; and Paul and Silas were the only Christian ministers in that city at the time. One or the other, therefore, must have administered the ordinance, and both were authorized administrators.

7th. The *seventh* example is that of the *jailer and his household*, Acts 16 : 33. And here again, either Paul or Silas must have administered the ordinance, for there was no other person to do it.

8th. The *eighth* example was that of *the several baptisms at Corinth*, Acts 18 : 1-8. These baptisms occurred under the ministry of Paul, Silas, and Timothy. Paul says that he baptized only Crispus, Gaius, and Stephanas in that city. The other baptisms, therefore, must have been administered by Silas and Timothy. In rebuking the Corinthians for their divisions, Paul thanks God that he had baptized so few of them, since it vindicated him from the suspicion of

seeking to be a party leader among them. (See 1 Cor. 1: 14-16.) And here the intimation is plain, that the practice of baptizing belonged exclusively to the ministry in the days of the Apostles. When Paul says, that "Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel," he evidently means, among other things, that baptizing was a subordinate part of his ministerial work; for the commission is, first to "*teach*" or make disciples, and then to "*baptize them.*"

9th. The *ninth* and *last* recorded example of baptism is that of "*certain disciples*" at Ephesus, Acts 19: 1-7. This case is worthy of special attention, since it furnishes an instance in apostolic times, in which the absence of an *authorized* administrator rendered the baptism invalid, and occasioned its re-administration. That these "twelve men" were re-baptized is clear from the narrative itself. And whether Paul administered the ordinance, or employed some other minister, is a matter of no consequence.

We have thus briefly examined all the examples of baptism, recorded in the New Testament, after the giving of the last commission of Christ, and shown in every case the presence of an *authorized* administrator; one who was *himself baptized and duly authorized* to administer the ordinance to others. Nor is there a single precept or example to the contrary in the New Testament, either under the ministry of Jesus or that of his inspired Apostles—*not one*. It is certain, therefore, that the Scriptures do restrict the right to baptize to an *authorized* administrator, as is proved:

1. From the appointment of John the Baptist to ad-

minister the ordinance ; 2. From the appointment of certain Disciples to baptize for the Savior ; 3. From the appointment of the "eleven Apostles" to baptize among all nations ; and 4. From the recorded examples of baptism in the New Testament. Let us inquire,

### III. WHAT ARE THE SCRIPTURAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR AN ADMINISTRATOR OF BAPTISM.

1. *Baptism, on a credible profession of faith*, is a scriptural qualification for an administrator of the ordinance. We say a *credible* profession of faith, because this is all that we can reasonably require. We do not and can not know the hearts of others, and hence we must in all cases act upon a credible profession of faith, and await the development of character. This indeed was all that our Lord required in order to baptism and church-membership. Acting then as the *sole executive* in his kingdom, and as the *pattern* of his churches—to be his *permanent executives* on earth, Jesus received even Judas Iscariot among his disciples on a *credible* profession of his faith and call to the ministry, and when properly instructed, ordained him to the apostleship—the highest office in his church, notwithstanding Christ, *as God*, knew from the beginning that Judas was an unbeliever, and would ultimately betray his Lord for money. (See John 6 : 64, 70, 71.) This is a strong case, and was recorded for our instruction and imitation. Had the Savior, however, acted upon his divine knowledge, and rejected Judas and other unbelievers who made a credible profession of faith,

then it would have been impossible for his churches and ministers to imitate his example in receiving members.

But while it is true that churches and ministers are obliged to admit applicants to baptism and church-membership on a credible profession of faith and await the development of their characters, still it is equally true that the Scriptures require all candidates not only to make such a profession, but *actually to possess faith in Jesus Christ*, in order to the validity of the ordinance. As it is written: "He that *believeth*, and is baptized, shall be saved." (Mark 16: 16.) "And Philip said: If thou *believest with all thine heart*, thou mayest. (Acts 8: 37.) "And many of the Corinthians hearing *believed*, and were baptized." (Acts 18: 8.) Such is the uniform teaching of the New Testament on this point. Hence we see that the law of baptism requires not only a credible and sincere profession of faith, but also *faith itself*, without which the immersion of an adult is no better than that of an infant. Baptism to be valid, then, must have a *believing subject*, as well as a scriptural action, design, and administrator. Sincerity can never be a substitute for faith.

If it be objected that "the condition of receiving baptism, on the part of the candidate, is not the actual possession of faith, but a sincere profession of it," we answer, that this objection is based upon the unscriptural assumption, that it is impossible for any one to *know* that he actually possesses faith in Jesus Christ. Now faith is both a mental and moral exercise, and its existence in the heart is known by our *consciousness*. The

Bible clearly sets forth the evidences or fruits of faith, and by comparing our feelings with these evidences, we may *know assuredly* that we actually possess faith in Jesus Christ. As it is written: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." (1 John 5: 10.) "Unto you therefore who believe he is precious." (1 Peter 2: 7.) "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5: 1.) These and other fruits of the Holy Spirit spring up in the heart the moment we believe in Christ, and they attest the existence of faith, while we are conscious of enjoying them at times in a measure. Accordingly, Paul says: "*I know whom I have believed*, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." (2 Tim. 1: 12.) John also says: "*We know* that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." (1 John 3: 14.) And the experience of every well instructed Christian corroborates God's word on this point. Hence it is evident that it is both our duty and privilege to *know* that we have faith in Jesus Christ, and that the actual possession of this faith is essential to valid baptism.

And if through ignorance or false teaching on this subject, an individual should submit to baptism on a credible and sincere profession of faith, when in fact he was destitute of faith in Christ, his baptism would of necessity be null and void, for genuine faith is essential to the validity of the ordinance. As a want of faith would invalidate his claim to personal piety, of course

it would invalidate his baptism. But if, on reflection, such a person should become convinced of his want of faith, and should repent, believe, and obtain the conscious evidences of faith in Christ, as many have done, then it would be both his duty and privilege to be *re-immersed* on a profession of his faith, just as if he had never been immersed. Nor would this be *re-baptism*, for his former immersion was no baptism at all. In all such cases, however, great caution and prudence should be exercised both by churches and individuals. If a person is conscious of having enjoyed any measure of the Bible evidences of faith, such as love, joy, peace, and the spirit of obedience to Christ, *previous* to his baptismal profession, then his baptism is valid and should not be repeated, although he may be destitute of any present evidence of his acceptance with God. His condition is that of a backslider, and he should remember from whence he is fallen, and repent and do his duty as he did when first converted. (See Rev. 2: 4, 5; 3: 15-20.) This is the sad condition of many Christians. (See Note on page, 152.)

Now, that baptism on a credible profession of faith is an essential qualification for an administrator of the ordinance, is plain from the Scriptures. (See Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16: 16; Acts 2: 41, etc.) The commission makes baptism the first public duty of every believer, and hence it necessarily precedes the duty of baptizing others. Jesus "made and *baptized* disciples," before he authorized any of them to baptize for him. And certainly no man can Scripturally administer the ordinance to others who is destitute of valid baptism

himself, as are Campbellite and Pedobaptist ministers generally. In the language of DR. J. B. JETER, we say: "One who is not himself baptized can hardly be authorized to baptize others." (See *Religious Herald* of Oct. 5th, 1871.) And in the language of the late ANDREW BROADUS, of Virginia, we say: "Baptizers in the Apostles' days were all baptized persons, except John the Baptist." And we have seen that John could not be baptized, because he was the first and only authorized administrator at that time. But John's was clearly an *exceptional case*, and therefore can not be plead in justification of unbaptized administrators at the present day.

The necessity of baptism on a credible profession of faith as a qualification for an administrator, is further evident from Scripture examples. Both Christ and his Apostles were baptized *previous* to administering the ordinance to others. In proof of this, see pp. 21, 22. Except John the Baptist, with whom baptism commenced, the New Testament furnishes no example of any one administering the ordinance, without having first been baptized himself—not one. This is *practically* admitted by all denominations, for they all require what they deem valid baptism as a necessary qualification for an administrator of the ordinance. And this universal requirement is as reasonable as it is scriptural. How could any man successfully urge obedience to an ordinance which he himself would not observe? The just retort of all would be—"Physician, heal thyself." It is action that produces action; we must practice what we preach, in order to induce others to obey.

There is peculiar power in example; it is truth exemplified. Hence we see that baptism on a credible profession of faith is a Scriptural qualification for an administrator of the ordinance.

2. *Regular Membership in a Gospel Church* is also a Scriptural qualification for an administrator of baptism. This is evident from the very *design* of the ordinance. Now there is *variety* of design in baptism, as there is also in the Lord's Supper. The primary design of the ordinance is—a formal and practical profession of faith in and subjection to the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Matt. 23: 19.) It is also designed as the ordinance of *initiation* into the visible kingdom of Christ, and a necessary *qualification* for church-membership in that kingdom. It does not *confer* membership in any church, but *qualifies* persons for it. The vote of a church alone confers membership in its body, and its vote dismisses or excludes from membership; just as an education qualifies a man for a professorship in a college, but does not constitute him a professor in any institution, while the vote of the Curators or Trustees makes him a professor or dismisses him. Baptism, then, is *initiatory* to citizenship in Christ's kingdom on earth, *preparatory* to church-membership in that kingdom, although it does not confer membership in any church. The Ethiopian eunuch furnishes a striking illustration of this point. (See Acts 8: 35–39.) The moment he was baptized on a profession of his faith, and by that very act, he was formally and publicly inducted into the visible company of Christ's followers, and was thus qualified for church-

membership, but he was not a member of any visible church until he was received by a vote of the church. (See *Missile* No. III, pp. 173-178.)

Now admission into Christ's visible kingdom by baptism always and necessarily has reference to *admission into a Gospel church* in that kingdom, and hence every administrator should so instruct his candidates—"teaching them to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded;" and it is equally the duty of candidates to receive the ordinance with special reference to becoming members of such a church without delay. And as the authority to baptize belongs exclusively to the churches of Christ, *as such*, it follows that a Gospel church must in all cases authorize its administration either directly or indirectly, and that every candidate should submit to the ordinance with the intention of uniting with such a church immediately.

The sole right, then, to initiate penitent believers into the visible kingdom of Christ by baptism, belongs to the churches as his permanent executives on earth. Accordingly, all regular Baptist churches vote first on the fitness of the applicant for baptism, and then to receive him into church-fellowship. For convenience, however, both votes are often taken together, "to become a member *when* baptized." But as a church can not administer the ordinance in its *collective* capacity, it must do it by its authorized agent or servant. The pastor of a church, therefore, is the proper person to baptize all applicants for membership in its body. Still it is the *church* that baptizes, just as Jesus baptized by his disciples, or as government administers the

oath of allegiance by its authorized agents. (See pp. 66-68.)

If this be true, and surely no Baptist will deny it, then the immersions of Campbellite and Pedobaptist ministers can not be regarded by us as valid, for those ministers have no authority from any Gospel church to administer the ordinance; and hence no Baptist church would allow them to immerse its candidates. *True*, the Apostles often baptized far away from any church, but they were fully authorized by Christ himself to make and baptize disciples among all nations. The world was then *missionary ground*, and they acted as *missionaries*: just as do our missionaries now under similar circumstances. They approve and baptize converts *for the churches* and as the *authorized agents* of the churches from whom they hold their credentials of ordination. Under such circumstances ministers are obliged to act on their own judgment, and to baptize converts by previous authority until churches can be established. But where there is a church accessible, no minister has a divine right to approve and baptize candidates on his judgment alone. Much less has any Baptist minister a scriptural right to baptize persons to join Campbellite or Pedobaptist churches or to unite with no church, and thus encourage them in disobedience and sin.

But whether a minister be a settled pastor or a traveling missionary, he must in all cases baptize *by church authority*. It is, in fact, the church baptizing by its *authorized agent*, let the ordinance be administered where it may. And this official work is re-

stricted to *ordained ministers of the Gospel*. The New Testament furnishes neither precept nor example to the contrary ; and this indeed is the order established by the commission which unites the duty of "*baptizing*" with that of "*teaching*" in the same persons. (See Matt. 28 : 19, 20.)

Now, that regular church-membership is a Scriptural qualification for an administrator of baptism, is further evident from the fact, that the ministry is an office "*in*" the churches — "*set in the church*," as Paul expresses it. (1 Cor. 12 : 28.) That is, it is *established in each particular church* for the mutual benefit of all the churches. (See Eph. 4 : 11–16.) The ministry, therefore, is neither co-ordinate with, nor independent of, much less superior to the churches, but is part and parcel of the churches, and receives its *official authority* from the churches ; and hence it is properly responsible to the churches in the execution of its official work. No minister of Christ, therefore, ever baptizes *absolutely* on his own responsibility, but always by the authority given him in ordination by his church, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. Otherwise, the ministry would not be an office "*in*" the churches, but "*over*" them, as is the case with Pedobaptist ministers generally.

But if the ministry be an office "*in*" each church, as Paul expressly declares it is, and if ministers receive their authority to baptize *from* the churches, as we have proved, then it follows of necessity that *regular membership in a Gospel church* is an indispensable qualification for an administrator of baptism ; for cer-

tainly no church has a divine right to ordain any man to the work of the ministry who is not a member of its body. Nor have ministers a right to induct any man into the sacred office without the authority and concurrence of his church. The churches, in fact, ordain all ministers, as they baptize all candidates; Presbyteries are but the agents of the churches in performing the ceremony of ordination, while they represent the whole denomination and the ministry in particular. Accordingly, DR. J. M. PENDLETON, of Upland, Pa., in speaking of "duly qualified" administrators of baptism, says: "They must be ordained to their work by vote of the churches of which they are members. This is the essence of ordination. What an ordaining council does is a formal recognition of what a church has already substantially done" (See *Religious Herald*, of March 14th, 1872.)

3. *Correct faith and practice* are Scriptural qualifications for an administrator of baptism. These qualifications were possessed by all administrators of the ordinance during the personal ministry of our Savior. That John the Baptist was correct both in faith and practice, none will deny. "The Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus," was the embodiment of "*the truth*," and fulfilled "*all righteousness*." And the "Disciples," by whom Jesus baptized, had been specially called and instructed by himself, and of course were sound in faith and practice. Even Judas Iscariot maintained his profession until he betrayed his Lord, and was reputed sound both in faith and practice.

The same was true of the administrators of baptism after the ascension of Christ. "*The eleven*" had been taught and trained for three years by the great Teacher himself, and then endued with power from on high by the Holy Spirit, as the founders and instructors of the churches for all time. Matthias was chosen to fill the place of Judas, with special reference to his *fitness* for the high position. And Paul "the Apostle to the Gentiles," was pre-eminently sound in faith and practice. Timothy and Titus were instructed and trained by Paul himself, who aided in their ordination. And the same Apostle prescribed the qualifications requisite for a "bishop" or minister, as a man "*holding fast the faithful word, as he had been taught,*" and of "*blameless*" life and reputation. So of all the administrators of baptism mentioned in the New Testament. They were men of correct faith and practice.

Happily, all denominations agree in theory on this point. None will admit the right of any man to baptize, whom they regard as unsound either in faith or practice. But do Baptists regard Campbellite and Pedobaptist ministers as sound in faith and practice? Would they not exclude their own ministers for holding and teaching the distinctive doctrines of Campbellites and Pedobaptists? No Baptist Church can regard the ministers of other denominations as correct in faith or practice on the subject of baptism. To do this would be to admit that our own ministers are unsound on this subject, for we differ essentially on this and many other points of faith and practice.

The fact, however, that some administrators of bap-

tism become heterodox in faith and immoral in practice, does not militate against this position. Baptizing, like administering the oath of allegiance, is an *official act*, and so long as a properly authorized administrator maintains his standing in a Gospel church, his baptisms are valid, even though he may prove to be an unconverted man. *For instance*, if our Lord authorized and employed Judas Iscariot to baptize for him before he developed his true character and forfeited his standing as a minister, his baptisms were equally valid with those of the other Apostles.

Accordingly, DR. A. C. DAYTON, speaking of an unconverted administrator, says: "So long as he is a member and a minister, his *official acts* are valid for all church purposes whatever his secret personal character before God may be. The church in her ignorance believed him to be a true believer; such he professed to be; as such she intrusted to him her ordinances. When she is undeceived, she must depose and exclude him; but till she does so, his official acts are valid." (*Pedobaptist Immersions*, p. 260.)

4. *Ordination by a Gospel Church through the conjoint agency of a Presbytery of ordained Ministers* is also a Scriptural qualification for an administrator of baptism. Jesus, as the *sole executive* in his kingdom while on earth, appointed and ordained all ministers of the Gospel himself. In proof of this see Matt. 10: 1-7; Mark 3: 14; Luke 10: 1-12; John 15: 16. But when he ascended up to glory, then his churches became the *permanent executives* in his kingdom, with full power to elect and ordain all ministers, as well as to

enforce his laws and administer his ordinances. The authority, therefore, to elect and ordain to office belongs exclusively to *the churches as such*, but as a church can not ordain in its *collective* capacity, any more than it could baptize, it employs ordained ministers representing the whole denomination, and the ministry especially, to examine the candidate and perform the ceremony for it; and hence the ordination is equally valid in all the churches of the kingdom. In the language of DR. WM. WILLIAMS, Professor of Theology in the "Southern Baptist Theological Seminary," then, we add, "that the right to ordain vests primarily in a church, and a Presbytery is only the *organ* of the church, very properly and necessarily called in to give due weight and influence to its recognition and commendation." (See *Christian Index*, of January 25th, 1872.)

This was clearly the practice of the first Gospel churches, acting under the instructions of the inspired Apostles. Thus Matthias was elected and ordained to the Apostleship by the first church. (Acts 1: 21-26.) Paul received his *call to preach* directly from Christ, and immediately commenced preaching, without conferring with flesh and blood (See Acts 9: 20; 20: 24; 26: 15-18; 1 Cor. 1: 17; Gal. 1: 15-19); but he received his *authority to baptize* indirectly from Christ *through the Church at Antioch* by whom he was ordained. (See Acts 13: 1-3.) Though he had been preaching and studying preparatory to the Ministry for more than three years (Gal. 4: 16-18), we have no account of his baptizing any one *previous* to his ordina-

tion by that Church. Thus Timothy also was ordained to the work of an *Evangelist*, "with the laying on of hands of the Presbytery," of which Paul was a member. (1 Tim. 4: 14; 2 Tim. 1: 6; 4: 5.) Thus Paul and Barnabas officiated for the churches in ordaining "*elders*" or pastors in Asia Minor. (Acts 14: 23.) And thus Titus was left in Crete to co-operate with the churches in ordaining "*elders*" or pastors in every city. (Titus 1: 5.) The same was true of all ministers of the Gospel during the Apostolic age. In every instance where the particulars are given, we find that suitable men were formally inducted into the ministerial office by ordination; and, in fact, there is no other way of entering the sacred office. No man was regarded as eligible to the pastorate or qualified to administer the ordinance of baptism without such ordination.

Now, this is, and ever has been, the practice of Baptist churches. Indeed, they will not allow *Licentiates* to baptize their own converts until they have been ordained, and thus clothed with *church* authority to administer the ordinance. And when ministers of other denominations embrace Baptist sentiments and unite with our churches, we never permit them to baptize until we have ordained them. No Baptist church will receive *alien* ordination, though some few are inconsistent enough to receive *alien* immersion as valid baptism. Nor are we alone in this requirement. All denominations, except the Campbellites, require what they are pleased to regard as valid ordination *prior* to administering the ordinance. On this point all agree both in theory and practice; and hence the Presbyterians

may be allowed to speak for all. The CONFESSION OF FAITH, chap. xxvii, sec. 4, speaking of the administration of "*Baptism and the Supper*," says: "Neither of which may be dispensed by any, but by a minister of the word, *lawfully ordained*."

Hence it is plain both from the Scriptures and from church practice, that ordination by a Gospel church through the conjoint agency of a Presbytery is an essential qualification for an administrator of baptism. This necessity arises from the following facts: 1st. That Christ has given the *authority* to baptize to his churches; 2d. That the churches can administer baptism only by their *authorized* agents; 3d. That *ordination* by a Gospel church, through the conjoint agency of a Presbytery, is the *divinely appointed ceremony* of initiation into the ministerial office, by and in which this authority is conferred; and hence, 4th. That baptizing is an *official act*, and as such, can be Scripturally performed only by an officer of a church. Its validity depends not upon the *character* of the administrator, but upon the *authority* by which it is administered: just as the validity of the oath of allegiance depends not on the character of the officer, but upon his *official authority* to administer it. Accordingly, DR. JETER, in giving the "*qualifications of a baptizer*," remarks, "that the administrator should be pious—baptized—a church member—called of God to the ministry—authorized by the church to engage in the ministry—and duly ordained to the work." And he adds, that "while there may be some question as to what constitutes valid ordination, there is an almost universal

agreement in our churches as to its necessity, in some form, in order to the administration of baptism." (See *Religious Herald*, of Oct. 5th, 1871.)

Such, then, are the *Scriptural qualifications* for an administrator of baptism: 1. Baptism on a credible profession of faith; 2. Regular membership in a Gospel church; 3. Correct faith and practice; and 4. Ordination by a Gospel church through the conjoint agency of a Presbytery of authorized ministers.

Having shown that the *authority* to baptize belongs exclusively to the *churches as such*, and that the Scriptures require an *authorized* administrator, and also what are the *Scriptural qualifications* for an administrator, we will answer,

#### IV. THE MOST PLAUSIBLE OBJECTIONS TO THIS VIEW OF THE SUBJECT.

1st. It is objected, "*that the authority to preach necessarily includes the authority to baptize.*"

The argument here is, that as preaching is a more important duty than baptizing, the greater necessarily includes the less. This reasoning is plausible, but sophistical. While it is true that the whole necessarily includes its parts, it is not true that the greater always includes the less, except the less be a constituent part of the greater. For instance, it would be usurpation for the chief executive of the United States to assume the functions of a subordinate officer. (See *Dagg's Church Order*, p. 254.) So, though preaching is a higher duty than baptizing, it does not necessarily include it. These duties are essentially distinct, though

properly combined in the same class of officers. Every man who is divinely called and properly qualified may and ought to preach, but none except regularly ordained ministers have a right to baptize.

Now this objection is based upon the false assumption, that the authority to preach and the authority to baptize are identical. But the authority to preach is *divine only*, while the authority to baptize is both *divine and ecclesiastical*. As we have shown, a call to preach is directly from Jesus Christ *by the Holy Spirit*, and is complete in itself; but the authority to baptize is indirectly from Christ *by a Gospel church*, through the conjoint agency of a Presbytery. This view is confirmed by the words of Paul: "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel" (1 Cor. 1: 17); implying not only that preaching was his main business, but also that he received his authority to baptize in the ordinary way, i. e. *by church ordination*. (See Acts 13: 1-3.) And this view perfectly harmonizes with the context, in which Paul cuts off the pretext of those who claimed superior baptism from him as an apostle.

In this particular the commission given to "the eleven" apostles differed essentially from that given to Paul. Jesus himself had previously called and ordained them to the ministry, and hence they were authorized by him both to preach and baptize. But he merely called Paul to be an apostle and authorized him to preach the Gospel, leaving him to receive his authority to baptize *from the church at Antioch* by regular ordination. And this fact proves that the

authority to preach does not necessarily include the authority to baptize. Had the greater included the less, Paul could not have said in truth, "Christ sent me not to baptize." Yet he had authority to administer the ordinance, and occasionally exercised it, as in the case of Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas (1 Cor. 1: 14-16); and doubtless he received it in the ordinary way. Accordingly, DR. J. L. DAGG remarks: "There was a fitness in the arrangement that this ceremonial induction into office, should add the ceremonial authority to baptize. It can not be proved to be given in the internal call of the Spirit. It was not given in the extraordinary commission of Paul. If Paul received it in the ordinary way, whether in his being set apart at Antioch, or in some similar service at some previous time, we have this point established:—the authority to administer baptism is conferred in the ordinary course of ministerial succession, when an individual, called by the Holy Spirit to the ministry of the Word, is publicly set apart to this service." (*Church Order*, p. 257.)

On this point the Baptists, at least, practically agree. All Licentiates of Baptist churches have a right to preach the Gospel, but none have a right to baptize even their own converts, until they have received authority from their respective churches by regular ordination. And this, in fact, should settle the question with all Baptists that Campbellite and Pedobaptist immersions are not valid; for certain it is that their ministers have no authority from Baptist churches to administer baptism for us. In our judgment, they are

not Scripturally ordained ; and as we reject their *alien* ordinations, so we should reject their *alien* immersions. There would be infinitely more propriety in receiving baptism administered by our own licensed preachers, than that administered by ministers equally unauthorized, and yet holding and teaching errors for which we would exclude our own ordained ministers. Hence it is evident that the authority to preach does not include the authority to baptize.

2d. It is objected, "*that any one who makes a disciple is authorized by the Commission to baptize him.*"

This objection, though plausible, is fallacious. According to this interpretation of the commission, it is proper for parents, whose instructions have been blessed to the conversion of their children, to baptize them, and such baptism would be valid. Among those who regard baptism as a saving ordinance, this view might well be adopted ; as indeed it has been in cases of necessity, when laymen and even women administered the rite to the sick. But certainly no Baptist would admit this interpretation of the commission. If some duties required of ministers may be performed by laymen, it does not follow that any and every disciple of Christ has the authority to baptize.

The Apostles were required by the commission to make disciples and then baptize them ; and when they could not administer the ordinance themselves, they were to make provision for its administration. This they did by the establishment of sovereign and independent churches. As we have shown, the commission was given to the Apostles *for the churches*, and accord-

ingly they deliverd it to the *churches as such*, to be carried out in all its requirements by them as the *permanent executives* in Christ's kingdom on earth. Christ by the Holy Spirit furnishes his churches with ministerial gifts, and requires them to cultivate and devote them to the work of the ministry. The churches, therefore, preach the Gospel by their spiritual gifts, and administer baptism by their authorized agents. And these facts clearly prove, that the administration of baptism was not left to any one who might make a disciple but is restricted to those whom the churches authorize.

In the language of DR. S. G. HILLYER we say : " While Christ was upon the earth, he had power to appoint whom he would to this work, and his appointment conferred sufficient qualifications. But when he was about to ascend to his Father, it became necessary to make arrangements for the future. He accordingly commissioned the Apostles to " Go, and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them." Under this broad commission, that extraordinary body of divines, full of the Holy Ghost, and guided by an infallible inspiration, . . . established churches in every direction over the Roman empire, and gave to them the ordinances which they were to observe, and the laws of Christ which they were to obey, to the end of time. In one word, both by precept and example, they established that " church order," or polity, which should constitute for all time the basis of their

organizations. A part of that church polity was to provide for the appointment of those who should administer the ordinances. As we have shown, the authority to administer baptism is conferred when a man, called of God to preach the Gospel, is publicly set apart to the work of the ministry by his church through the agency of a Presbytery." Hence DR. HILLYER adds: "It follows that the church, acting through its Presbytery by the imposition of hands, confers that *official* gift which qualifies for the administration of the ordinances. This seems to have been the rule which the Apostles established for the observance of the churches in this matter." (See *Texas Baptist Herald*, of July 17th, 1872.)

3d. It is objected, "*that John the Baptist was not baptized, and yet he administered the ordinance.*"

True enough, but was John's a parallel case? As has been shown, baptism commenced with him. He was the first and only authorized administrator until Jesus was baptized and entered the ministry. John felt his need of baptism (Matt. 3: 14), and doubtless would have been baptized if he could, but it was impossible at that time, for there was no one authorized to baptize him. He had the spirit of universal obedience to Christ, but could not exercise it in obeying this ordinance for the want of an authorized administrator. And the very fact that he desired baptism but could not then obtain it, proves conclusively that an authorized administrator is essential to the validity of the ordinance. His, therefore, was an exceptional

case, and can not be urged as an objection to the position here assumed.

Yet it is true that John's baptism was valid, for he was *divinely authorized* to administer the ordinance; and if Campbellite and Pedobaptist ministers can show such authority, either from Christ or from a church of Christ, then and not till then, can Baptists consistently receive their immersions as valid baptism. As we have proved, the validity of the ordinance depends essentially upon the *authority* by which it is administered: just as the validity of the oath of allegiance depends upon its being administered by an authorized agent of government. Baptizing, therefore, is an *official act*, and as such must be performed by a legally authorized agent, or it is not Scriptural and valid.

4th. It is objected, "*that as God blesses the labors of other ministers, we should receive their immersions.*"

We cheerfully admit that God does bless the labors of other ministers so far as they preach and practice the truth; for he would not despise his own truth, though it were preached by Satan himself. But we deny that God approves and blesses the *errors* held and practiced even by good men, for the God of truth hates all error and sin. We believe that many Pedobaptist ministers are divinely called to preach, and we say they ought to preach, and not to leave baptism and union with a Gospel church undone. Except the want of baptism and proper church-membership, we regard and treat them as we do our own licensed preachers.

But the mere fact that God has called a Pedobaptist minister to preach and gives success to his labors, fur-

nishes no reason why we should receive his immersions as valid baptism, any more than it is a reason why we should receive the baptism of our own licentiates as valid. Preaching is not an *official act*, but baptizing is ; and hence no man, though divinely called to preach, has a right to administer baptism without authority from a Gospel church. As has been shown, the authority to preach does not include the authority to baptize, although both duties are restricted to the same class of persons. As in the case of Paul, Christ authorizes men to preach, and his churches authorize them to baptize.

Nor is this all. Pedobaptist ministers generally preach and talk and write against immersion, and would banish it from the world, if it were in their power. Many of them denounce it as "*unscriptural, indecent, and dangerous*," and use every possible means to dissuade honest persons from submitting to it. And when they are forced to administer immersion or lose members, they reluctantly do it merely to gratify the "*foolish whims*" of candidates, and not in obedience to Jesus Christ. Such immersions are no more valid than sprinkling or pouring, and much more sinful ; "*for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*" (Rom. 14 : 23.) How can any Baptist regard such immersions as valid baptism ?

5th. It is objected, "*that if the candidate was sincerely pious and is satisfied, his baptism is valid, though it be irregular.*"

This reasoning is faulty in several respects. It is based upon the false supposition, that the piety and

sincerity of the candidate can make the ordinance valid. On this principle sprinkling might be valid baptism, for doubtless some pious persons submit to the unscriptural rite with a sincere desire to obey Christ and are satisfied with it. The defect, however, is not in the candidate, but in the administrator. The candidate does his part right, but he merely *submits* to the ordinance. The administrator does his part wrong, for he has no authority from a Gospel church to baptize any one, and hence his administration of the ordinance is no more valid than the oath of allegiance would be, if administered by a private citizen. As we have proved, immersion by an unauthorized administrator is no baptism at all, let the candidate be ever so pious and sincere.

Nor is it enough that the candidate be satisfied with his baptism. He alone can not decide this question. The church to which he applies for membership must also judge of the validity of his baptism and be satisfied. Indeed, a Gospel church is the divinely constituted judge both of the piety and baptism of all applicants for membership in its body. As we have seen, no person has a right to baptize himself, or to select his own administrator regardless of his qualifications. The only proper administrators are regularly ordained ministers of the Gospel; and if a candidate receive the ordinance at the hands of any other it is no more baptism than if he had immersed himself, even though he be satisfied with it. Accordingly, the late DR. A. P. WILLIAMS, of Mo., speaking of the administrator of baptism, says: "*A regularly ordained minister is*

the only *authorized administrator* of this ordinance." And speaking of the recipient of baptism, he adds: "It is his duty to use all diligence to satisfy himself that the man from whose hands he is about to receive the rite is Scripturally authorized to administer it." (See *The Lord's Supper*, pp. 83, 84.) And DR. J. L. DAGG, speaking of the case of a candidate baptized by an unauthorized administrator, says: "The church of which he wishes to become a member, must exercise judgment on the case. If the candidate's satisfaction with his baptism would suffice, persons baptized in infancy might obtain admission into our churches without other baptism. The church is bound to judge and to regulate its judgment by the will of God." (*Church Order*, pp. 284, 285.)

Much less is immersion valid baptism when *irregular* in a matter so important as the *administrator*, without whose agency baptism could not exist. All admit that baptism is a *positive* ordinance, based upon *positive* law; and as such, it must be right in its mode, subject, design, and administrator, or it is no baptism at all. And we have before proved, that the sole authority to baptize is vested in the churches of Christ as the executives in his kingdom, and that no man has a Scriptural right to administer the ordinance without authority from a Gospel church. And Campbellite and Pedobaptist ministers are destitute of such authority. This, at least, is *practically* admitted by all Baptists. No Baptist church will permit a minister coming from another denomination to baptize until she has authorized him by ordination. How, then, can any Baptist

church receive the *irregular* immersions of Campbellite and Pedobaptist ministers as valid baptisms? Hence we see that such immersions are not baptism.

6th. It is objected, "*that this theory requires us to trace an unbroken succession of authorized administrators from the Apostles.*"

The advocates of alien immersion boldly assert, that if an authorized administrator is essential to valid baptism, then no one can certainly know that he is baptized, unless he can trace an unbroken succession of such administrators back to the Apostles. This argument is specious, but it is a false conclusion from a true premise. We believe that such a succession has existed in all ages, and we find abundant evidence of the fact in church history, but we most emphatically deny that Baptists are under any obligation to trace this succession through the labyrinths of uninspired history, in order to establish the validity of their baptism. Omniscience alone could trace it with unerring certainty, even if it were necessary.

Now, we have already proved that Jesus himself authorized "the eleven" to baptize disciples and constitute them into churches, and that the first Jewish church authorized Matthias, while the first Gentile church authorized Paul to baptize. We have also shown that Christ, by his inspired Apostles, committed the laws and ordinances of his kingdom to the churches as such, and that the sole authority to baptize belongs to the churches as his permanent executives on earth. But as the churches in their collective capacity can not administer the ordinance, they do it by their authorized

agents, just as Jesus baptized by his chosen disciples. The validity of baptism, therefore, depends essentially upon *church authority*, and not upon ministerial succession or any thing else ; and hence the only question to be settled is, whether the administrator was regularly authorized by a Gospel church to administer the ordinance. No candidate is required to go back of the church that authorized the administrator, in order to know that his baptism is valid, just as no man is required to go back of the marriage of his parents in order to establish his claim as a legitimate heir.

But it may be said, that this only removes the difficulty from the administrators to the churches, and hence we are bound to trace our church succession from the Apostles, in order to make good our claim to valid baptism. Now, we reaffirm our belief that such a succession of Churches has ever been in existence, whether it can be traced or not, and we base our belief on the promises of Christ and the facts of History. Jesus declared of his first church, or *ecclesia*, that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. (Matt. 16 : 18), and promised to be with his successive churches and ministers always, even unto the end of time (Matt. 28 : 20 ; and, in the absence of proof to the contrary, we are entitled, if not required, to believe that he has kept his word, and consequently that there has been a continuous succession of Gospel churches from the Apostles until now. And this belief is confirmed by the fact, that authentic History in every age describes churches whose constitution, government, faith, and

practice clearly identify them with modern Baptist churches.

And when we find a church holding the doctrines of Christ, and "walking in all the laws and ordinances of the Lord blameless," constituted upon the divine model, as is every Baptist church, we are justified in taking it for granted that it is a Gospel church, until some one can and does prove to the contrary. We are under no necessity of going back to ask by whom it was constituted, much less to trace its pedigree in all past ages. In the language of the late DR. DAYTON : "If it looks like a true church, believes like a true church, and acts like a true church, to me it is and must be a true church, until the contrary has been established. The burden of proof falls upon the adversaries. We do not need to establish our pedigree. It is for them to invalidate it; and that not by suppositions, but by facts. Until this is done, such a church is to be regarded as a part of the great visible kingdom of Christ, and authorized by him to administer his ordinance." (*Pedobap. Immersions*, p. 140.)

Now, if any one denies that such a succession of churches has existed, and bases his argument upon this assumption, then it devolves upon him to disprove the fact. Certain it is that no Baptist is under any necessity to trace his succession back to the Apostles, in order to prove the validity of his baptism, any more than a man is bound to trace his lineage back to Adam, in order to prove the legitimacy of his birth. With the New Testament in our hands, we boldly affirm that existing Baptist churches are *identical* with the Apos-

tolie churches in every essential particular, and wherever a Baptist church is found, it has full power to authorize any suitable man to administer baptism, though all history were blotted out of existence. Baptist churches, by universal consent, are Gospel churches, and as such, they need no succession of administrators, to give validity to the ordinance. Each church is fully competent to baptize its own converts, by its authorized agent, and such baptism is valid. Hence all ordained Baptist ministers are Scripturally authorized administrators. (See *Missile* No. IV, p. 251.) It follows, therefore, that every penitent believer who receives baptism at the hands of an ordained Baptist minister, is Scripturally baptized, although the administrator could not be traced beyond his ordination. The validity of the act depends, not upon any succession, but upon *church authority*.

But we are vauntingly told that American Baptist churches originated with ROGER WILLIAMS, who was immersed by an unauthorized layman. It is true that WILLIAMS was thus immersed, and therefore his baptism was null and void. But it is not true that any Baptist church originated with him or his so-called church. Nor did he baptize any one, except Thomas Olney, whoever baptized others, and Olney was authorized to administer the ordinance by a regular Baptist church. This whole question has been thoroughly examined and fairly settled by the REV. S. ADLAM, Pastor of the First Baptist Church, in Newport, R. I. Mr. Adlam has carefully collected a volume of facts on this very point, showing, 1st. That the First Church

in Newport was established by Dr. John Clark in 1638, and is the oldest Baptist church in America. 2d. That Roger Williams was baptized and organized his little church in Providence, March, 1639, and, becoming dissatisfied with his *lay*-baptism, he left the church in July following, and never returned to it. (See *Backus' Church Hist.* p. 50.) 3d. That this "*thing* called a church soon after came to nothing," in the language of Cotton Mather, and had no connection with any Baptist church. And 4th. That no Baptist church, living or dead, ever sprung from Williams or his little church. (See "*1st Baptist Church in America*," by Adlam, issued by the "South-western Publishing House," Memphis, Tenn.) The Baptist churches of America descended chiefly from the English and Welsh Baptists, and from the valleys of Piedmont.

Accordingly, Dr. A. C. DAYTON, speaking of Roger Williams' church, says: "That so-called church lived a siekly life for a short time, and died. Other Baptist churches existed before it, and others have been formed since, without the slightest connection, direct or indirect, with that little anomalous affair which the Pedobaptists are so fond of designating the Mother of the Baptist denomination in America, but which every Baptist ought to know was an accidental and temporary organization, disconnected with the regular Baptist Churches. We may freely admit that their baptism was null and void, without any serious detriment to our denominational order." (*Pedobaptist Immersions*, p. 113.) (See also "*Church Communion*," pp. 142-153 ;

and "*Trials and Sufferings for Religious Liberty*," by J. R. Graves.)

7th. It is objected, "*that after all, the immersion of a believer is valid baptism, by whomsoever it may be administered.*"

Mark 16 : 16, is adduced with great confidence in support of this objection. But to assume that an authorized administrator is not essential to valid baptism, because the Evangelist simply says, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*," is to assume too much. If the expression, "*is baptized*," may be interpreted to mean an *immersion* merely, no matter how or by whom, then the phrase, "*he that believeth*," may also be interpreted to mean *believing* merely, no matter what or in whom. The fact is, the language here in regard to baptism is *elliptical*, just as it is in regard to faith, and both expressions must be interpreted in harmony with Matthew 28 : 19, where the duty of baptizing is expressly enjoined upon the administrator. As the expression, "*he that believeth*," necessarily implies Christ as the only proper object of faith, so the phrase, "*is baptized*," necessarily implies a proper administrator by whom it is performed. And the same is true of all those references to baptism where the administrator is not expressly mentioned.

Now, if the immersion of a believer on a profession of his faith, regardless of the administrator, were all that is necessary, then any and all Christians might properly administer the ordinance, and such baptism would be valid. Parents might baptize their believing children, and children their parents. But we have

shown, that even a special Divine call to preach does not of itself authorize a man to baptize his own converts, as in the case of Paul and that of our Licentiates. Every man who is divinely called has a right to preach, but no man has a divine right to baptize without authority from a Gospel church, given by regular ordination. Hence it is evident that valid baptism necessarily includes a *Scriptural administrator*, as well as a *Scriptural action*, subject, and design.

Such are the principal objections urged against the necessity of an authorized administrator of baptism, and they virtually include all others. Having briefly answered these objections, we proceed to show,

## V. THE EVILS OF "ALIEN IMMERSION."

Among its many evils, we mention the following :

1. *Alien immersion is unscriptural, and hence not valid baptism.*

We have already shown, 1st. That the sole authority to baptize is vested in the churches of Christ ; 2d. That an authorized administrator is essential to the validity of baptism ; and 3d. That none but ordained Baptist ministers possess church authority to administer the ordinance. With these facts established, it follows of necessity that the immersions of Campbellite and Pedobaptist ministers are unscriptural and hence invalid, for none of them have authority from Gospel churches to baptize, and they all administer the ordinance with an unscriptural design.

How, then, can Baptists, whose only rule of faith and practice is the BIBLE, receive such unauthorized

immersions as valid baptism? In the language of DR. DAGG, we say: "Only duly qualified ministers of the Gospel are authorized to administer baptism." And with DR. JETER, we say: "Regeneration, baptism, church-membership, a blameless life, a divine call to the ministry, *ordination and church authority*, are all, according to Scripture teaching and Baptist usage, essential to the regular administration of baptism. . . . On these points all Baptists unite. Pedobaptists are not authorized to administer the ordinance of baptism—we should not employ them to perform it for us, and we should discourage all persons from seeking it at their hands." (See *Religious Herald*, of March 14th, 1872.) And the same is equally true of Campbellite preachers. Of course, then, no Baptist church should receive such unauthorized immersions as valid baptism. Hence we see that the great reason why all Baptist churches and ministers should reject *alien* immersions is, because they are unscriptural and hence not valid baptism.

2. *Alien immersion tends to introduce unbaptized persons into Baptist churches.*

Now, it is unquestionably true that Bible readers generally are favorable to immersion, notwithstanding the combined opposition of Pedobaptists to it. Doubtless this is owing to the fact, that the Scriptures know nothing as baptism but immersion. It is well known that with Campbellites baptism is "*the Gospel in water*;" and that without immersion there is "*no promise of salvation*." And modern Pedobaptists manifest a growing aversion to believer's baptism, and

judging from their preaching and writings, they would gladly expurge it from God's Word, if it were in their power.

For example, Methodist ministers generally denounce and ridicule immersion as "*unscriptural, indecent, and dangerous,*" and do all they can both privately and publicly to bring it into contempt; while in cases of necessity they will administer the ordinance in a truly unscriptural, indecent, and dangerous manner rather than lose members. Now, one of two things must be true: either these ministers are dishonest in thus opposing immersion, or they administer it in unbelief, which is a sin rather than a religious service. (See Rom. 14: 23.) As to Old School Presbyterians, they boldly deny that immersion is Scriptural baptism at all, and hence refuse to administer it to any one, although they will reluctantly receive it as the less of two evils. As to Congregationalists and Cumberland Presbyterians, they still tolerate believers' immersion and occasionally administer it to gratify the "*whims*" of weak disciples and swell their numbers, but they give their influence against the ordinance, and would gladly banish it from the world.

In view of these undeniable facts, we say, with DR. RICHARD FULLER, of Baltimore: "As to *Pedobaptist immersions*, we regard them as *too irregular* to be ever allowed." (See *Religious Herald*, of Oct. 20th, 1870.) And in the language of the late DR. BASIL MANLY, SEN., we say: "Pedobaptists never immerse, when the candidate can be persuaded to any other method; they generally *speak against* that particular mode, and some-

times ridicule it, and they seldom fail to make a ridiculous and contemptible farce in their way of administering it—to say nothing of these administrators being themselves unbaptized. . . . Now, when Baptists are asked to receive these baptisms, they are asked, in effect, to sanction these proceedings, and thus to become partakers with them in this objectionable administration. . . . *If one is a Baptist, let him be a Baptist?*” (See *Letter to a Minister*, in 1848.)

Now, all those persons who submit to alien immersion ought to be and no doubt would be Baptists, if they were properly instructed. But we neglect this important duty ; and the hue and cry every-where raised against our *Church Communion* by Campbellites and Pebobaptists fills the minds of these uninstructed Baptists with prejudice against us, and drives them into churches holding doctrines which they do not and never can believe ; such, for instance, as *Clerical domination*, *Baptismal remission*, *Infant sprinkling*, etc. Thus multitudes of honest Christians, holding Baptist sentiments so far as they understand our faith and practice, submit to immersion at the hands of these unauthorized ministers, with the delusive hope of obtaining baptism and enjoying their so-called “*open communion*,” just as some pious persons submit to sprinkling or pouring, and imagine they are Scripturally baptized. All such misguided brethren and sisters should be taught the way of the Lord more perfectly on this subject, and affectionately urged to be baptized and unite with churches holding doctrines which they honestly believe.

Hence we ask, how can any Baptist church receive

such immersions as Scriptural and valid baptism? Yet these are the persons who ever and anon knock for admission into our churches on such *pseudo*-baptisms. And, strange as it may appear, some *modern* Baptists advocate the propriety of receiving them! Not so did the ancient *Anabaptists*—those “faithful witnesses for the truth,” whose very name given by their enemies attests the fact. Accordingly, DR. MOSHEIM says: “They acquired the denomination of *Anabaptists* by their administering *anew* the rite of baptism to those who came over to their communion.” (*Mosheim’s Church Hist.*, by Maclaine, vol. 2, p. 127.) CARDINAL HOSSIUS, President of the Council of Trent, says: “The *Anabaptists* are a pernicious sect, of which kind the Waldensian brethren seem to have been. Nor is this heresy of modern origin, for it existed in the days of Austin.” And ZUINGLIUS, a contemporary of Luther, adds: “The institution of *Anabaptism* is no novelty, but for *thirteen hundred years* has caused great disturbances in the church, and has acquired such strength that the attempt in this age to contend with it appeared futile for awhile.” (See *Pedobap. Immersions*, pp. 149, 150.)

3. *Receiving alien Immersion legitimately tends to Mixed Communion in our Churches.*

Now, all denominations agree that valid baptism is essential to church-membership, and that regular church-membership is pre-requisite to the Lord’s Supper. Hence, one chief argument in support of our *Church Communion* is, that Campbellites and Pedobaptists are destitute of valid baptism, and consequently disquali-

fied for church-membership and for communion at the Lord's Table in our churches. Yet all Campbellites and many Pedobaptists have been immersed on a profession of faith, and if their baptism be valid, they unquestionably possess this essential qualification for the Lord's Supper. There may be other and sufficient reasons why we should not inter-commune with them, but to admit the validity of their immersions, necessarily robs us of one great argument in favor of our practice, and opens the door for Mixed Communion.

Accordingly, DR. SHAVER, Editor of the "Christian Index," in speaking of the *views* of certain distinguished apologists for alien immersion, says: "We distinctly repudiate them. And we would account it a denominational *disaster*, if they should gain general acceptance among us. For taken singly, they furnish the basis of a plausible argument for the indifference of Baptist ordination and for loose communion, or the toleration of it. Practically, we think, among the masses and in the long run, they would work toward these results." (See *Christian Index*, of April, 1872.)

Now, what is the real ground on which we refuse inter-communion at the Lord's Table with Campbellite and Pedobaptist churches? It is essentially this: *We do not regard them as true and Scriptural churches of Jesus Christ; because they have not been baptized, and because they hold, and teach, and practice many things contrary to the requirements of the Gospel. But we need not here go into particulars.* (See *Missile* No. IV, pp. 253.) Suffice it then to say, that if they are unbaptized, they can not be true churches of Christ,

for all *His* churches, according to the New Testament, were composed of baptized believers. Hence we refuse church fellowship and communion with them, not because they are not Christians, but because they are not Gospel Churches. It is thus we fulfill the solemn injunction of the Apostle: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the traditions which he received of us." (2 Thess. 3: 6.) And we would treat a disorderly and heretical Baptist church precisely in the same way. We would at once disown any Baptist church which should thus deny the faith and pervert the ordinances of Christ. Here, then, is the basis of our Church Communion. Regarding the Lord's Supper as a Church ordinance, as all admit it is, we dare not invite those to partake of it who are not *members* of orderly Gospel Churches.

Moreover, if Campbellite and Pedobaptist ministers are qualified to administer baptism, it will certainly be very difficult to prove that they are disqualified for communion at the Lord's Table; for we have shown that baptism and the Lord's Supper are both *church* ordinances, the only difference being, that the former is administered by church authority *outside* of any church, preparatory to entering, and the latter is celebrated *in* each church by its members collectively. The one can no more be administered without church authority than the other; for they are equally church ordinances. It follows, therefore, that if Campbellite and Pedobaptist ministers are authorized to baptize, they must

also be authorized to partake of the Lord's Supper; and if their immersions be valid, then those immersed by them must be equally qualified to partake of the ordinance. Hence we see that receiving alien immersions necessarily opens the door to Mixed Communion in our churches, and is, in fact, the first step towards it. Indeed, Mixed Communion among Baptists originated in *lax* views of baptism. (See "*Church Communion*," pp. 222-226.) Accordingly, Free Communion Baptists either advocate receiving alien immersions, or deny that any baptism is prerequisite to the Lord's Supper.

4. *Receiving alien Immersion is glaringly inconsistent in Baptists.*

In what way could a Baptist church act more inconsistently than to receive alien immersions? If its own pastor held and taught the errors held and taught by Campbellite and Pedobaptist ministers, it would unhesitatingly exclude him, and thus deprive him of all authority to baptize any one. Yet it seems that if he should join a Campbellite or Pedobaptist church, as many excluded Baptist ministers do, then forsooth some modern Baptist churches would receive his unauthorized immersions as valid baptism! Now, if Campbellite and Pedobaptist ministers belonged to Baptist churches, they would be excluded for heresy, unless they should repudiate their peculiar doctrines and practices. How glaringly inconsistent, therefore, is it for any Baptist church to receive the immersions of such heretical and unauthorized ministers; holding and teaching errors for which we would be compelled to

exclude our own ministers. Hence it is evident that Baptists act most inconsistently whenever they receive alien immersions as valid baptism.

If it be said that Baptist churches being sovereign and independent, can *legalize* Campbellite and Pedobaptist immersions by the very act of receiving them, we answer, that this would be an *ex post facto* law, and proves too much. Baptist churches, though sovereign and independent, are not without law to Christ, and hence have no right to do wrong; and, while they are fully competent to authorize any member of their body who is divinely called to the ministry to baptize for them, still the authority must in all cases *precede* the act, in order to the validity of the ordinance. And if they could legalize the immersions of Campbellite and Pedobaptist ministers simply by receiving them as valid, much more could they legalize the immersions of their own licensed preachers, in the same way, and thus ordination would become wholly unnecessary. Hence we see that this reasoning is not even good sophistry, and no sound Baptist would employ it.

5. *Receiving alien immersion is a public endorsement of Campbellite and Pedobaptist churches as Gospel churches.*

Baptists maintain that a Gospel church is a local congregation of baptized believers, voluntarily associated together in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; that it is a sovereign and independent body in the kingdom of Christ on earth; and that its only Scriptural officers are a bishop, or pastor and deacons, who are subject to the discipline of the church. Such

were the Apostolic churches, and such are all regular Baptist churches. (See *Missile* No. IV, p. 190, etc.) Accordingly, no Baptist church will permit its own licensed preachers, or ministers coming from other denominations, to baptize even their own converts, until they have been regularly ordained, and thus clothed with church authority to administer the ordinance. And every Baptist church claims and exercises the sole right to judge of the Christian character of all candidates and to authorize their baptism. When our evangelists and missionaries approve and baptize converts where there is no church, they act by *church authority* and for the churches. It is, in fact, the churches receiving and baptizing by their authorized agents, just as Jesus baptized by his authorized disciples.

Now, all true Baptists are agreed on these points of faith and practice. But if the above be a correct definition of a Gospel church, then it follows that Campbellite and Pedobaptist churches are not Gospel churches; and consequently that their ministers are not authorized administrators of baptism. Accordingly, DR. WILLIAM WILLIAMS, Professor of Theology in the "Southern Baptist Theological Seminary," says: "My definition of a *Scriptural* church is, an organized assembly of baptized believers in Christ, where the pure Word of God is preached, the ordinances rightly administered, and discipline maintained. This definition necessarily excludes Pedobaptist churches. They are assemblies of unbaptized believers *and* unbelievers, (*infants*.) They are not churches, as were

those assemblies to which the Apostle wrote his epistles." (See *Christian Index*, of Jan. 25th, 1872.) And the same is true of Campbellite churches, except they do not embrace infants. Campbellism, as a system, embodies fundamental errors on the design of baptism, on faith, repentance, spiritual influence, justification, the Lord's Supper, etc., which invalidate its claims to being a true church of Christ. And Pedobaptism, in all its branches, has radically changed the constitution, government, and ordinances of Christ's churches, and substituted human organizations and ordinances in their stead; thus "making void the commandments of God by their traditions." Indeed, if they are Gospel churches, Baptist churches are VILE USURPERS, and ought not to exist as distinct organizations; for they differ essentially in many things essential to Gospel churches.

Moreover, Baptists hold that no man is Scripturally authorized to administer baptism without regular ordination, and that no man is Scripturally ordained without the authority of a Gospel church. On these points all Baptists see eye to eye and speak the same thing. Whether right or wrong, this is Baptist faith and practice. Now, if we are correct in these views, it follows of necessity that we indorse Campbellite and Pedobaptist churches, as Gospel churches and their ministers as authorized administrators by the very act of receiving their immersions as valid baptism. With our views of Gospel churches and ordination, this is unquestionably the meaning of the act. It is impossible, therefore, to admit the validity of alien immer-

sion, without admitting the validity both of alien churches and alien ordination.

6. *Receiving alien immersion tends to produce discord in Baptist churches.*

Unfortunately modern Baptists are somewhat divided in their views and practice on this important subject. Some wise and good brethren regard alien immersion as unscriptural and of evil tendency, and hence can not conscientiously receive it as valid baptism; while others equally wise and good regard it as irregular baptism and not to be encouraged, yet they can receive it as valid. With the former, it is a matter of conscience; with the latter, it is a mere matter of expediency. All can reject it without the sacrifice of principle, while many can not receive it without the violation of conscience. None doubt the validity of our own baptisms, and it is the right of all to be satisfied on this subject. This end can be attained only by baptizing all those whom we admit to membership in our churches, even though some may have been immersed by Campbellite and Pedobaptist ministers. To receive alien immersion, therefore, necessarily tends to produce discord in our churches, while it does no good.

Nor is there any remedy for this evil so long as any of our churches continue to receive such unauthorized immersions. Scarcely a Baptist church can be found in which there are not members conscientiously opposed to alien immersion. And even if some churches could receive it unanimously, many others can not; and thus an obstacle would be raised to the transfer

of membership from one church to another. A large number of our best laymen and ministers believe such persons to be destitute of Scriptural and valid baptism, and, therefore, disqualified for church-membership and for communion at the Lord's Table. And the only possible way to harmonize our brethren on this subject and to have peace among ourselves, is for every church and minister to reject such doubtful and irregular baptisms. As before remarked, all agree that the immersions of our own ordained ministers are both Scriptural and valid; and hence no person should be received into any Baptist church without such baptism. Thus the whole difficulty would be removed at once. And surely no one ought to wish to enter a Baptist church on a baptism which all Baptists regard irregular and unsatisfactory. In the language of the late DR. MANLY, we say: "If one is a Baptist, let him be a Baptist." And in the language of the late ANDREW BROADUS, of Va., we say: "*Pedobaptist ministers have no right to be tampering with baptism, they themselves refusing to submit to the ordinance.*" (See *Pedobaptist Immersions*, p. 29.)

It is not enough to plead that this question must be left to the churches. While it is true, and we glory in the fact, that every Baptist church is a sovereign and independent body in the kingdom of Christ, still it is equally true that a majority have no Scriptural right to disregard the conscientious convictions of a minority—much less have a minority a right to disregard the honest convictions of a majority; nor has one church a divine right to persist in a course that will

unavoidably produce discord in other churches. Baptist churches are free to do right, and they are subject to Christ and his laws in all things. They are not at liberty either to offend or to cause others to offend; and they are required to "follow the things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another."

In the language of DR. DAYTON, we say: "The Baptist family should be one. This should especially be true in regard to the character of the membership. It is surely a sad thing for some churches to receive and regard as church members, persons whom other churches do not and can not regard as such, because in their opinion they have not been baptized; and all Baptists hold that baptism is an essential prerequisite to church membership. Now every time that any church receives a member upon a Pedobaptist, Campbellite, or any other unauthorized immersion, she introduces into the Baptist family a person, whom very many of the churches, and probably a number of her own members, do not regard as having been baptized any more than if he had been sprinkled in his infancy for baptism. They are obliged to fellowship this individual or raise a disturbance."

"But suppose that a church should be entirely united upon this subject, and the candidate should be admitted. He afterwards desires membership in another church in which they are equally united in the opinion that he should not have been received. He presents his letter, and asks for membership; the brethren must show apparent discourtesy to the recommendation of a sister church, or else receive into their number one

whom they all with one accord believe to be an unbaptized man. Why should Baptists continue to create such troubles for the churches, when there is confessedly no necessity for it? All admit that there is *no sin* in re-immersing such persons." (See *Pedobaptist Immersions*, pp. 17-19.)

7. *Receiving alien immersion is bad policy, and doubtless loses us many valuable members.*

From various causes, but chiefly from mistaken views of our Church Communion, many persons holding Baptist sentiments, are strongly tempted to unite with mixed communion churches. They are convinced that the immersion of a believer is the only Scriptural baptism, and they can be satisfied with nothing else. If they could obtain immersion at the hands of Baptist ministers, they would greatly prefer it. But such is their prejudice against our practice of communion, that when they see Baptist churches indorse alien immersion by receiving it as valid baptism, they readily submit to it at the hands of Campbellite and Pedobaptist ministers, and unite with churches professing to practice *open* communion.

Now, it is doubtless true, that if all Baptists bore united testimony against alien immersions and alien churches, many of these honest but misguided Christians would be convinced of their error, and led to obey Christ in baptism, and to unite with Baptist churches. But as it is, our testimony is divided, and hence our influence is paralyzed. There can be no doubt but we lose many valuable members every year by admitting the validity of Campbellite and Pedobap-

tist immersions. How could it be otherwise, when some of our churches and ministers advocate receiving such immersions, and thus encourage others to receive them? Receiving alien immersions, therefore, is not only bad policy, but of evil tendency. It necessarily tends to drive persons into error, and to confirm them in that error.

No person that believes in conversion before baptism can be a Campbellite. Nor can any one be a Pedobaptist who believes in exclusive immersion. All such persons are Baptists in faith, and, if rightly instructed, would be Baptists in practice. In fact, they can not be any thing else than Baptists without sinning; "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Rom. 14: 23.) And it is clearly the duty of Baptists, and especially of Baptist ministers, to instruct and urge all such deluded persons to obey Christ in baptism and to unite with our churches. Nor can we innocently neglect this duty. If we are Baptists from principle, then we ought to desire and seek by all proper means to induce others to become Baptists. It is evident, therefore, that receiving alien immersions is bad policy, and loses us many valuable members.

Such, then, are a few of the many evils of alien immersion: 1. It is unscriptural, and hence not valid baptism. 2. It tends to introduce unbaptized persons into our churches; 3. It legitimately tends to mixed communion in our churches; 4. Receiving such immersions is glaringly inconsistent in Baptists; 5. It is a public indorsement of Campbellite and Pedobaptist churches as Gospel churches; 6. It tends to produce

discord in our churches ; and 7. It is bad policy, and loses us many valuable members. Hence we close

## VI. WITH A FEW PRACTICAL DEDUCTIONS.

We learn from the whole subject,

### 1. *Who are Scriptural Administrators of Baptism.*

By universal consent, ordained Baptist ministers are such ; and, as has been shown, none others are Scripturally authorized to administer the ordinance. Now, if this be true, as all Baptists believe, then it follows that there is no regular and valid baptism, except that administered by our own ordained ministers. Nor can the piety and sincerity of the candidate compensate for the want of church authority in the administrator. And this, in fact, is one great reason why we do not and ought not to intercommune with other denominations ; for all hold that Scriptural and valid baptism is prerequisite to church-membership and to communion at the Lord's table.

Accordingly, the "GEORGIA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION," at its recent meeting in Macon, April 29th, 1872, by a rising vote, unanimously adopted the following *Resolutions* respecting Baptism and the Lord's Supper as being "Scriptural and in conformity with the views and practices of our churches," viz :

"1st. That baptism is the immersion of a believer in Jesus Christ, by an *authorized* administrator, in the name of the Trinity.

"2d. That such a baptism is an indispensable prerequisite to church-membership and to admission to the Lord's Supper.

“3d. That unbaptized persons, not being church-members, can not be clothed with authority to administer the ordinances, and therefore immersions performed by such persons are null and void.

“4th. That the sincerity of the subject can not supply the want of authority in the administrator.” (See *Christian Index*, of May 2d, 1872.)

These resolutions are undoubtedly Scriptural, and in harmony with Baptist views and practices in all ages; and they clearly prove that Campbellite and Pedobaptist ministers are not authorized administrators of baptism.

2d. *What constitutes Scriptural and Valid Baptism.*

As was stated at the outset, valid baptism necessarily includes four things, at least, viz: 1. A Scriptural *Action*—an immersion in water into the name of the Holy Trinity; 2. A Scriptural *Subject*—a penitent believer in Jesus Christ who is conscious of pardon; 3. A Scriptural *Design*—not a condition or means of obtaining the remission of sins, but an emblematic or symbolic declaration of the fact; and 4. A Scriptural *Administrator*—a regularly ordained minister of the Gospel. The want of any one of these four things invalidates the ordinance, and renders it null and void. And certain it is that none of these four essentials is more important than the Administrator, by whom the ordinance is performed, and without whose agency baptism could not exist.

Nor can a right mode, subject, and design compensate for the want of an authorized administrator. As we have proved, *church authority* received in ordina-

tion through the agency of a presbytery, is an indispensable qualification for an administrator of the ordinance. On this point, at least, all Baptists practically agree in regard to their own preachers. No Baptist church would receive the immersions of its own licensed preachers; much less should any receive the immersions of Campbellite and Pedobaptist preachers, who are equally destitute of authority from our churches to administer the ordinance. Baptist immersion, then, is the only Scriptural baptism.

Accordingly, the late DR. S. H. CONE, of New York, in answer to a letter of inquiry on this subject, says: "You ask whether persons immersed by Pedobaptist ministers ought to be received into a Baptist church. I answer, No. Such baptisms are not considered valid by the regular Baptist churches, either of England or the United States. See the commission, 'Go ye,' etc., and 'Let all things be done decently and in order.' There would be nothing but disorder introduced into Gospel churches, could baptism be administered by any but ministers duly authorized." (See *Pedobaptist Immersions*, by Dr. Dayton.)

3d. *That every believer may know that he has Scriptural and valid baptism.*

As before shown, it is the duty of every applicant for baptism to select a *qualified* administrator—one that has been immersed on a profession of his faith, by an authorized minister, and regularly ordained to the work of the ministry by a Gospel church. To submit to the ordinance at the hands of a man who is

destitute of these qualifications, would be no better than self-baptism; in other words, it would be no baptism at all. But as none doubt the authority of ordained Baptist ministers to administer the ordinance, and as such ministers may be found wherever the Gospel has gone, every believer may obtain a baptism that is received as valid by all throughout Christendom. Baptist immersion, like pure gold, is current every-where and in all churches.

Nor need any person go one step back of the church that authorized the administrator to know that his baptism is valid, any more than a child need go back of the marriage of its parents to know that its birth was legitimate. All this ado about tracing our apostolic succession in order to know that we have Scriptural and valid baptism, is the veriest twaddling, utterly unworthy of any intelligent Baptist. As we have shown, no Baptist is under the slightest obligation to trace his Apostolic pedigree, although we believe it exists. Wherever a Baptist church is found, it has full power to authorize any suitable man to administer baptism for it, and such baptism is as certainly valid as if it had been administered by the Apostle Paul himself.

4th. *Baptists stultify themselves whenever they receive alien immersion.*

On the one hand, they deny that Campbellite and Pedobaptist churches are Gospel churches, and repudiate the ordinations of their ministers; and on the other hand, they indorse both their churches and ordinations by the very act of receiving their immersions

as valid baptism. We thus invalidate our own testimony, and place ourselves in a most humiliating position. And all for what? Simply to gratify some mistaken brother or sister, and to shun the opposition of brethren in error, who are "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" on many points. While it is our duty to love and respect piety wherever found, we are not at liberty to indorse error in any one, however pious he may be.

But why thus stultify ourselves? As has been remarked, it is bad policy, not to say sinful, to receive such doubtful and irregular baptisms. Doubtless if all Baptist churches and ministers would oppose and reject alien immersions, we should receive tenfold more additions from other churches than we now do in our divided and inconsistent course. This would give full force to the united testimony of a great denomination of acknowledged Christians, and lead multitudes to believe and obey the truth as it is in Jesus. At any rate, we would be consistent with our avowed principles, and would command the respect of all right-minded men and women; while God would honor our faithfulness with success.

5th. *The duty and interest of all Baptists in regard to alien immersion.*

If the views advanced be true, as we verily believe, then it is clearly the duty of all Baptists to oppose and reject alien immersions. In all ages Baptists have been "the faithful witnesses for Christ and his truth," and, though persecuted and slain for the truth's sake, still their very blood has been the "seed of the church,"

and God has evidently been for us, while men have been against us. As members of this great and growing household of faith, it becomes us to act worthy of our ancestry and of our crucified but exalted Redeemer; and in order to do this, we must "keep the ordinances as they were first delivered to the churches."

And in this, as in every thing else, God has connected our duty and interest inseparably together. "Honesty is the best policy;" and no considerations of present advantage or temporary popularity should cause us to indorse error or swerve from the truth. We should cherish and manifest Christian affection for all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. But this very love requires us to defend the truth and to oppose error. Thus did Christ and his Apostles, and thus we are required to do. As it is written: "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." (2 Tim. 2 : 25.) Both our duty and interest, then, require that we unitedly reject all alien immersions.

6. *How this vexed question may be amicably and finally settled among Baptists.*

Not by perpetual controversy and strife, but by mutual conciliation and forbearance. Neither by an appeal to great names, but by the New Testament fairly interpreted. It is well known that many of our best brethren are conscientiously opposed to alien immersion, and never can receive it as valid baptism; while all regard it as doubtful and irregular, and think it ought to be discouraged. With some it is a matter

of conscience and principle, with others it is a mere matter of expediency and indifferency; while none doubt the validity of Baptist immersions. Hence it is obviously the duty of the latter to yield to the conscientious convictions of the former, and to unite in requiring all applicants for church-membership to receive baptism at the hands of our own ordained ministers as a matter of course.

Thus and only thus can this vexed question be amicably and finally settled among us, and that without the sacrifice of a single conscientious principle; and henceforth we should have no more doubtful and irregular baptisms in our churches, and all controversy on this subject would end forever. Then all our members would unquestionably have the "*one baptism*," on a profession of the "*one faith*," in the "*one Lord*." (Eph. 4: 5.) Nor would we thus prevent any worthy persons from uniting with our churches. On the contrary, by our united example and testimony against all such false baptisms, we would doubtless prevent many honest but misguided Christians from submitting to immersion at the hands of unauthorized administrators, and cause them to seek baptism at the hands of our own ministers. There is, in fact, no other remedy for this growing evil, and surely all Baptist churches and ministers will thus unite in practice and settle the difficulty forever among ourselves.

7th. *The great importance of having our rising ministry properly instructed on this subject.*

Christ has invested his ministers with divine power, and made it the duty of his people to obey and sustain

their Scriptural teachings. (See 1 Thess. 5 : 12, 13 ; Heb. 13 : 17 ; 1 Pet. 5 : 1-4.) While ministers are subject to the discipline of the churches, and are their servants for Jesus' sake, and while they have no legislative or coercive power over the churches, still they have exemplary and declaratory power, and so far as they preach and practice the truth, all are as much bound to obey and sustain that truth as if Christ himself preached and practiced it in person. And both Christians and sinners will be held to a strict account at the last day for the manner in which they treat the truth thus presented.

But education moulds the ministry, and if our licentiates be mistaught or not taught at all on this subject, our churches will suffer the evil consequences. As we have clearly shown, the New Testament is not silent in regard to the administrators of baptism, though some Baptists are silent on the subject. There is neither precept nor example for any one administering baptism without direct authority from Christ or from a church of Christ ; and Campbellite and Pedobaptist ministers are destitute of such authority. Our rising ministry, therefore, ought to be taught that the immersions of such unauthorized men are unscriptural and of evil tendency, and should be rejected by all Baptists. Thus our churches would be correctly taught on this subject, and soon we should be united in faith and practice. Nor can we innocently and safely allow our young ministers to be mistaught or neglected.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS.

1st. *To Baptist Ministers who were received and ordained on alien immersion.*

Happily, we have but very few of such ministers in our churches, and those few, like DR. RICHARD FULLER, of Baltimore, should at once "*resolve to correct this irregularity, and leave nothing informal in this solemn act.*" In giving an account of his *re-baptism*, Dr. Fuller says: "I was a member of a Pedobaptist church, and was immersed. On joining that church, I required it of the pastor, for, as a Greek scholar, I was satisfied that baptism was immersion. When conviction compelled me to become a Baptist, I reflected on the subject, *was baptized again*, and for two reasons: *First*, I then knew that I had never been converted to God before. And, *second*, my first baptism was clearly *irregular*. The first preachers were themselves baptized, and baptism by an unbaptized administrator appeared to me manifestly irregular. I, therefore, resolved to correct this irregularity, and leave nothing informal in this solemn act." (See *Letter to a Minister*, January 20th, 1857.)

But the question before us is this: *Is an immersion performed by such a minister valid baptism?* In the language of DR. DAYTON, "We answer, upon the principles already laid down, most certainly it is. So long as *the church* regards him as a member and a minister, so long, for all *official* purposes, he is a member and a minister, and a want of right baptism no more invalidates his *official* acts, performed in the name of the

church and on the authority of the church, than a want of *right faith* would have done. The church received him in her ignorance, supposing him to have been baptized, and as such intrusted him with authority to administer her ordinances. When she discovers her mistake, she should correct it by at once regarding him as unbaptized, but until she does, he is an authorized administrator." (*Pedobaptist Immersions*, p. 260.)

Now, we have seen that baptism on a credible profession of faith is a Scriptural qualification for an administrator, but the validity of the ordinance does not depend upon the piety or upon the baptism of the administrator, but upon the *authority* which he has received from a Gospel church through ordination, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. Without *church authority* thus conferred, all other qualifications combined could not authorize any man to administer baptism. Still, all such unbaptized ministers should, like Dr. Fuller, demand re-immersion at the hands of duly qualified administrators, and thus at once and forever settle the question of their baptism. Perhaps the churches and Presbyteries were more at fault than these misguided brethren, and when convinced of the error, they should correct it without delay. Doubtless God would approve of the act, and all right-minded persons would commend it. It is certainly irregular for any unbaptized man to administer baptism, and all should correct this irregularity.

2d. *To immersed Baptists in Campbellite and Pedobaptist churches.*

It is unquestionably true that there are multitudes

of persons holding Baptist sentiments in Campbellite and Pedobaptist churches. What those churches want with such members among them, is apparent to all. Certain it is that we want no persons holding Campbellite and Pedobaptist sentiments in our churches. Rather we would, as we have done, advise them to go where they properly belong; "for how can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Nor would any intelligent and worthy Baptist complain or persecute them for joining their own company. On the contrary, we would commend them for it.

Now, these misguided Baptists have been driven into those churches chiefly by the hue and cry against our "*close*," alias *Church* communion, with the delusive hope of enjoying their vaunted "*open* communion"—the veriest *humbug* of the age. And they are misleading their children and friends, and sinning daily, by giving their influence and means to promote errors which they do not believe; such as *clerical rule*, *baptismal remission*, *infant sprinkling*, etc. Most of these erring Baptists have been immersed by unauthorized administrators, and hence are destitute of Scriptural and valid baptism. All such inconsistent Baptists owe it to Christ, to themselves, and to their friends to be baptized and to unite with Baptist churches.

3d. *To all Baptist Churches and Ministers—a word of exhortation on this subject.*

We have written these pages for *Baptists*, and hence have assumed some things which none but Baptists will admit. For our views of the *Kingdom of Christ*,

and of *Gospel Churches*, we refer the reader to MIS-  
SILES III and IV of this volume ; and for our views of  
*the Lord's Supper*, we refer all to our work on CHURCH  
COMMUNION. If we know our own heart, we love  
all Christians as such, though they may be in error  
on many subjects. And we especially love all con-  
sistent and pious Baptists, and desire above all things  
to see them *one* in faith and practice on all the doc-  
trines and ordinances of the Gospel.

“Brethren, let us be consistent with ourselves. Let  
us not stultify and contradict our own reasonings. Let  
us not fear to carry out our positions to their legiti-  
mate and logical consequences. If we dare not do  
this, let us abandon the positions. Truth will always  
bear this trial. If we are right, let us be *all* right ;  
if we are wrong, let us give up all and begin anew.  
If we receive the *official acts* of these Pedobaptist ses-  
sions, class-leaders, bishops, and priests as Scriptural  
and valid, let us no longer befool ourselves and the  
world, by pretending that they have no authority from  
Scripture to perform them. If they *have* the authority,  
then upon our own cherished principles, they are true  
churches and true ministers, lawfully organized and  
ordained, and there is no reason why we should not  
fellowship and commune with them.” (See *Pedobap-  
tist Immersions*, pp. 215, 216.)

Finally, in the language of PROF. J. W. RUST, late  
Editor of the “*Western Recorder*,” we would state  
“OUR ONLY SURE LINE OF DEFENSE,” on this whole  
subject. “As a denomination, holding peculiar views,  
it is well sometimes to look at the ground upon which

we stand, and study the strong as well as the weak lines of our defense.

“1. All Baptists agree that every member has a right to commune in his own church. A few are disposed to extend this right to all professing Christians of the several Protestant denominations. In the defense of the first position we can present a united front, and, consequently, upon it could make our strongest defense. It is the advocacy of the second position that introduces schism into our ranks and weakens our forces.

“2. All Baptists agree in the validity of an immersion performed upon a proper subject by a regularly ordained Baptist minister. Some Baptists believe in the validity of immersions performed by a minister of any one of the several Protestant denominations. In the defense of the first position we can present a united front, and consequently upon it could make an undivided defense. It is the advocacy of the second position that introduces division into our ranks and weakens our forces.

“3. All Baptists believe that Baptist churches are true churches of Jesus Christ. A few Baptists believe that the various organizations of the several Protestant denominations are churches of Jesus Christ. Now, upon the first position we can make a united defense. Upon the second position there is a division of sentiment, and, consequently, a division of our strength.

“4. No Baptist disputes the right and the eligibility of the Baptist ministry to fill their own pulpits, and administer the ordinances by the authority of their own

churches. There are other Baptists who believe that this may be done in part, at least, by any minister of the several Protestant denominations. Now upon these two positions it is easy to see the only ground of united defense.

“It is said that the greatest power of any man is in the line of his own individuality. So we believe in regard to the Baptists as a denomination. Their greatest power and strongest defense is in the line of their own peculiarities. It is a safe standard of ethics to judge of measures by their general tendency. If the first four positions under each of the four heads were accepted and faithfully carried out, the full measure of our denominational integrity and influence would be attained. Pulpit affiliations, alien immersions, and open communion would no longer distract our Zion; but with one body and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, and in and through all, we would be bound together a powerful undivided people. But let the second of our positions under the four heads be accepted and faithfully carried out, and it would destroy the Baptist denomination. Open communion would prevail. Our pulpits would be filled by all sorts of preachers, preaching all sorts of doctrine. The administration of the ordinances would be committed to divers hands, and the Baptist denomination which has so long battled for its church independency, its baptism, its converted membership, its Church communion, would lose its identity among the organizations to which it has unwisely leveled it-

self by what we honestly believe to be an inconsistent and unscriptural policy.

“We propose no war upon the *Christian* character of individuals composing the several Protestant denominations. Upon many things we agree, but we candidly confess our inability to see any chance for permanent ecclesiastical harmony by mere efforts to unite together without an abiding affinity of sentiment.” (See *Western Recorder*, of Feb. 12th, 1870.)

NOTE. In answering the question, “Whether a church may regard a baptism as valid without *knowing* that the person baptized has *real faith*,” PROF N. K. DAVIS, L.L. D., late President of Bethel College, says:

“To this question, disconnected from other points in the controversy, and considered in its own terms, I answer, yes.

“Permit me to add that faith in the subject is certainly essential to baptism. But a credible profession of faith is a sole and sufficient basis of church action. It is impracticable to attain a higher basis. So long, then, as the profession remains credible, the act must be recognized and treated as baptism, and the church stands clear and right in this recognition. When it is manifest that faith in the subject was lacking, then it also becomes manifest that the act was not baptism, and that the subject is unbaptized.

“The question as to what is essential in a baptizer presents undeniable difficulties. That some qualification is essential, is admitted by all, and it follows that the rite administered by one lacking such qualification, is null. It seems to me that the only essential qualification of a baptizer is *authority from a church*, but that in conferring this authority, the church is subject to limitations which restrict its action to recognized and approved gospel ministers, in full fellowship, teaching its doctrine and preaching its faith. If subsequently it appear that the baptizer lacks faith, and hence is himself unbaptized, I think it can be proved that this does not render his previous administration null. (See *Western Recorder* of September 18, 1872.)

# MISSILES OF TRUTH.

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## MISSILE NO. III.

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### THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

NOTE.—The following Missile is the substance of an Essay read before the “BETHEL BAPTIST MINISTER AND DEACONS’ MEETING” of Southern Kentucky in 1860, and, after free criticism, was unanimously requested for publication in a permanent form. In compliance with the request of that body, and at the urgency of many brethren, the author has revised and stereotyped the work for use.

The new dispensation opened with the announcement, that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. (Matt. iii. 2.) And throughout the New Testament certain *words* and *phrases* are employed to designate the kingdom or reign of Christ, the true import of which it is of the utmost importance to understand. The want of a correct understanding of these words and phrases has ever been a fruitful source of error in theology. Let us, then, briefly define and explain them.

1. The original word *Basilia*, uniformly rendered *kingdom* in our common English version, occurs 160 times in the New Testament, and it answers to both our words *reign* and *kingdom*. In 140 cases the word

is used to designate the Kingdom of Christ in its various aspects and stages, and, in most instances, it ought to be rendered *reign* instead of kingdom, as is evident from the context. In all those passages which apply *motion* to this kingdom, and represent it as *approaching* or *drawing near*, and the like, the word obviously means *reign*, and not kingdom, and ought to have been so translated in our received version. We may properly speak of a *reign* as approaching or drawing near, but we can not thus speak of a *kingdom* as such. But when mention is made of *admission* into Christ's Kingdom or *exclusion* from it, or where there is a manifest reference to the *state* of the righteous here or hereafter; in all such instances it clearly means *kingdom*, and not reign. In short, when the word refers to the *beginning or duration* of the kingdom, it ought to be rendered *reign*, as, for example, in the Lord's prayer, Matt. vi. 10; but when it refers to the *persons or places* over which the dominion extends, it ought to be rendered *kingdom*, as, for example, in Matt. xiii. 43. In every instance, however, the meaning of the word must be determined by its connection.

2. Various phrases, such as "the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven," etc., are employed in the Scriptures to denote that *divine spiritual reign* which was foretold by the prophets, introduced by John the Baptist, and fully established by Christ and his apostles. These phrases, as used in the New Testament, are *synonymous*, and have reference always to *Messiah's reign* as predicted by the Old Testament prophets: sometimes pointing to the

future glories of his *everlasting reign* in heaven, and sometimes to his *spiritual reign* on earth, which is first *internal* as it exists in the heart of penitent believers, and then *external* as it is composed of the visible company of his followers, who have been baptized on a credible profession of their faith.

The establishment of the spiritual reign of Christ on earth was in fulfilment of prophecy, particularly that of DANIEL, who had declared (Dan. ii. 44) that "In the days of these kings (*i. e.*, during the existence of the *Roman empire*, the last of the four great monarchies that should succeed each other) shall the God of heaven set up a *kingdom* which shall never be destroyed;" and, also (Dan. vii. 13, 14), that "there was given unto Him (*i. e.*, 'the Son of man,' ver. 13), dominion, and glory, and a *kingdom*, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him," etc. Isaiah, Micah, and other prophets, bear explicit testimony to the same great truth. Accordingly, DR. ROBINSON, in his *Lexicon of the Greek Testament*, says: "These phrases (kingdom of heaven, kingdom of God, and kingdom of Christ) are *synonymous*, and signify the *divine spiritual kingdom*, the glorious *reign* of the Messiah. The idea of this kingdom has its basis in the prophecies of the Old Testament, where the coming of the Messiah and his triumphs are foretold." (See, also, DR. GEORGE CAMPBELL'S *Four Gospels*, vol. 1, Dissertation 5, pp. 132, 133.)

As this kingdom was set up by the God of heaven, it is denominated "the kingdom of *God*;" as it was of heavenly origin, it is styled "the kingdom of

heaven ;” and as Christ is its King, it is most frequently termed “the Kingdom of Christ.” The title usually given to the manifestation and means of its advancement is, “the Gospel of the kingdom ;” and occasionally, when viewed under a different aspect, it is called “the new covenant, or new testament.” With this brief explanation of the particular words and phrases employed to designate this kingdom, let us notice,

## I. THE NATURE OF CHRIST’S KINGDOM.

It was not a *continuation* of the Jewish theocracy. That kingdom was only a *type* of Messiah’s kingdom. Until John the Baptist, the nation of Israel, who received the law and the prophets, were *externally* the people of God. But they were not the kingdom of Christ, much less the church of Christ. They were the peculiar people of God *as a nation*, chosen as the *repository* of his word, and the *medium* through which, according to the flesh, Messiah should come. (See Rom. i. 3, 4; iii. 1, 2; ix. 4, 5.) The nature of Christ’s Kingdom may be learned from an examination of the Scriptures bearing upon this subject.

1. It was of *heavenly* origin. When Pilate inquired: “Art thou the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered: “*My kingdom is not of this world.*” (John xviii. 33, 36.) That is, it is not a *worldly* kingdom, made up of the godly and ungodly, such as was the Hebrew commonwealth; nor is it a union of church and state. But it is a *heavenly* kingdom, composed of those only who profess to be “*born again*”—i. e.,

“washed, justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” (John i. 11, 13; 1 Cor. vi. 11.) Though it is *in* the world, it is not *of* the world. Like its King, it is from above, and came down from heaven.

2. This kingdom is *spiritual* and *holy*. Its laws are holy, and all its requirements “holy, and just, and good.” (Rom. vii. 12, 14; James i. 25.) Its subjects are spiritual and holy—*born of the Holy Spirit*, and hence new creatures in Christ Jesus. (John iii. 8; 2 Cor. v. 17.) Its enjoyments are spiritual and holy: “For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” (Rom. xiv. 17.) Its King is pre-eminently “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” (Heb. vii. 26.) The ancient prophets foretold Messiah as the King to whom this spiritual and holy kingdom should be given. And Jesus claimed to be that King, and was publicly owned as such by the Father. “Pilate, therefore, said unto him: Art thou a King then? Jesus answered: Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world,” etc. (John xviii. 37.) In a word, every thing pertaining to this kingdom is holy.

3. It is a *peaceful* and *quiet* kingdom. Its King is “*the Prince of Peace*;” and “of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.” (Isa. ix. 6, 7.) In answer to the Pharisees who demanded *when* the Kingdom of God should come, Jesus said: “The Kingdom of God cometh *not with observation*:

neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is *within you*." (Luke xvii. 20, 21.) That is, it is an *internal* and *peaceful* kingdom, and operates imperceptibly and silently, like leaven in the meal. (See Matt. xiii. 33.) It has its seat *in the heart*, and comes not with pomp and show, like earthly kingdoms, but is established in the hearts of penitent believers *without observation*. The instant a penitent sinner receives and submits to Jesus, that moment the reigning power of Christ is set up in his heart by the Holy Spirit. "Therefore, being justified by faith, *we have peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 1.) And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keeps our minds and hearts through Christ Jesus. (Phil. iv. 7.) Thus we become the subjects of Christ's Kingdom *in heart* through faith.

4. Yet it is a *visible* and *powerful* kingdom. Its King is a *visible* King—"God manifested in the flesh." (1 Tim. iii. 16.) Though humble and retiring, he could not be hid. (Mark vii. 24.) As it is written: "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth." (Isa. xlii. 2, 3.) Its subjects are *visible* subjects—men and women, baptized on a credible profession of repentance and faith. (Acts viii: 12.) Its laws are *visible* laws, legibly written for our instruction and government. (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.) Its ordinances are *visible* ordinances, symbolizing the death, burial, and resurrection

of Christ, together with our death to sin, burial, and resurrection to newness of life through faith in him. (Rom. vi. 1, 5.) Its churches are *visible* organizations, to whom its laws and ordinances are committed, each constituting an independent and sovereign body, subject only to Christ as its Head and Lawgiver; with a fixed and well-defined constitution and government, and exercising all the gifts, rights, and privileges vested in them by the King in Zion. Its officers are *visible* officers—evangelists, pastors and teachers, and deacons, all subject to the disciplinary control of the churches. (Rom. xii. 6, 8; Eph. iv. 11; Phil. i. 1.)

This kingdom is not only visible, but *powerful* in its influence. As it is written: "It shall break in pieces and consume all these (human) kingdoms." (Dan. ii. 44.) "For the Kingdom of God is not in word, but *in power*." (1 Cor. iv. 20.) The Gospel, which is the great instrumentality in promoting this kingdom, is the *power of God* unto salvation to every one that believes in Christ. (Rom. i. 16.) It is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart," (Heb. iv. 12.) The Holy Spirit, the great and efficient agent in building up and extending this kingdom, is the Third Person in the Godhead—the almighty and eternal God. And "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but *mighty through God* to the pulling down of strongholds." (2 Cor. x: 4.) It is the most powerful and aggressive of all kingdoms.

Such, in brief, is the *Nature* of Christ's Kingdom: it is not a continuation of the Jewish theocracy; neither is it of this world, though in the world: but it is a heavenly kingdom, having its seat in the heart; and it is spiritual and holy, peaceful and quiet; yet it is a visible and powerful kingdom, destined to fill the whole earth, and to subdue all other kingdoms. In its *inward* workings, it is comparable to the *leaven*; in its *outward* developments, it is like the *mustard seed*, which, though the smallest of its kind, grows up, and becomes the greatest of herbs, partaking of the nature of a tree. (See Matt. xiii. 32, 33.) Let us notice,

## II. THE ORIGIN OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

When was it established on earth? It was unquestionably *set up under the ministry of John the Baptist*. John was divinely commissioned to introduce and proclaim this new kingdom, and to "prepare a people made ready for the Lord." (Matt. iii. 1—3; Luke i. 17.) He was expressly "sent to *baptize*" penitent believers on a credible profession of repentance and faith (Luke iii. 8; Acts xix. 4); and to "*manifest*" the new King to Israel, and *publicly induct* him into his Kingdom by baptism. (Matt. iii. 13, 17.) As it is written: "Behold, I will send my messenger (John the Baptist), and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant (*i. e.*, the Lord Jesus Christ), whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord. But who may abide the

day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. . . . Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." (Mal. v. 1-3, 18.)

Hence, we learn that a new order of things was to be established under the ministry of John the Baptist. Under the old dispensation there was no *visible* mark of distinction between the righteous and the wicked. No preparation of *heart* was necessary to citizenship in the Jewish theocracy. Membership in that kingdom was founded on hereditary descent and nationality, and not on moral character. Every Israelite and every proselyte to Judaism, whether righteous or wicked, who had been *circumcised* according to the law of Moses, was a member of the Jewish commonwealth, and entitled to all its privileges. It was an *earthly* kingdom—of *this world*, and served as a *type* of that *heavenly* kingdom which is "*not of this world*." (John xviii. 36.) But under the new dispensation, a *thorough preparation of heart* is required to fit a man for the *spiritual reign of Christ*—so thorough that it is styled a *new birth*, a *new creation*, etc. (See John iii. 3; Rom. xiv. 17; Cor. v. 17; Eph. ii. 10.) Every one must be "*born again*"—"purified" from sin and uncleanness, and "*purged*" from guilt, through the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit and belief of the truth (2 Thess. ii. 13, 14), in order to *qualify* him for ad-

mission into the Kingdom of Christ ; and no man can scripturally “ *enter into* ” that kingdom on earth, and enjoy its privileges as a citizen, except he be “ *born of water,* ” or baptized, as well as born of the word and Spirit of God. (See John iii. 5 ; 1 Pet. i. 23.)

It remained, therefore, for John the Baptist to introduce this new dynasty, and proclaim the new dispensation foretold by the holy prophets. From *that time* the kingdom of heaven was preached, and all men were required to *prepare in heart* by repentance and faith for the spiritual reign of Messiah ; and then by baptism, as the *initiatory* rite, to declare themselves *openly* as the subjects of the King of Zion. Thus men pressed into this new kingdom, and, by their earnestness, took it by force. (See Matt. xi. 12, 13.)

Accordingly, the late DR. N. M. CRAWFORD says : “ In the great history of the world’s redemption, John the Baptist stands alone. The law and the prophets were before him. The Messiah and the kingdom of heaven were after him. He overtopped all that preceded him, for he was ‘ more than a prophet.’ He fell short of all that followed him, for ‘ he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.’ It was his prerogative to *introduce* the kingdom, but not his privilege to *enter* it. . . . His whole duty was to proclaim the kingdom, to point out the King, to prepare a people for that kingdom by repentance ; and, by baptism, to bind them to obedience as a community of believers. . . . By repentance thus preached, the Jews, who believed John were *turned to God* : by baptism they made themselves *known* as the followers

of the coming Messiah—the Messiah already standing among them (John i. 26), but not yet declared. By repentance they received the *moral quality of heart* that fitted them for the reign of Christ: by baptism they were *initiated visibly* into the community of the people of God. In accordance with these views, Mark (i. 1) styles the preaching of John, “The *beginning* of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” (See *baptism of Jesus*, chap. ii, pp. 17, 22.)

The old dispensation, with all its cumbrous rites and ceremonies, was now done away. As it is written: “The law and the prophets were *until* John; *since that time* the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.” (Luke xvi. 16.) “And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.” (Matt. xi. 11, 12, 13.) And Jesus said: “Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.” “Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you.” (Matt. xxi. 31; xxiii. 13.)

Now, all this could not be said in truth if the Kingdom of Christ were not *then* established on earth. How could men press into it, or take it by force, or shut it up, if it were not in existence? It is certain that this kingdom was now set up, for Jesus says so. From *what time*, then, did it date its existence? John was still alive, though in prison. Men are pressing into it, and

the violent are taking it by force. The only limit which the words of Christ and the recorded facts will allow us to fix, is *the time when John began to proclaim the kingdom*. From *that time* men pressed into it, and it suffered violence. That was "*the beginning* of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;" and from that time men began to embrace the Messiah, and formally to submit to him by baptism. In short, then, the Kingdom of Christ on earth commenced with the first convert which John baptized on a credible profession of repentance and faith, and it increased with every additional convert thus baptized.

Hence, it is evident that the kingdom which Jesus preached during his life time had its *origin* with the ministry of John the Baptist. It was still the same kingdom when preached by the apostles and evangelists after the ascension of Christ. True, the forms under which it appeared at different epochs might vary, but amid all variations it was *essentially one and the same kingdom*. It was the same when preached by John before and after the Messiah was manifested to Israel; the same when preached by "the twelve" and "other seventy" before and after the Savior was crucified. The progress of events was as necessary in this kingdom as in any other in which men and the affairs of this life are concerned. A greater or less degree of glory might be manifested as circumstances varied, but these variations affect not the *essence* or *identity* of the kingdom itself. The ministry of Jesus was more glorious than that of his harbinger; but still brighter glories attended the out-pouring of the Holy

Spirit and the greater works of the apostles. Yet these were not different kingdoms, but only the *progressive stages* of the same kingdom. That kingdom into which men pressed from the days of John, therefore, was "the *everlasting* kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (See Heb. xii. 28 ; 2 Pet. i. 11.) (See also *Baptism of Jesus*, pp. 22, 23.)

Accordingly, the late Dr. JUSTIN EDWARDS says : "This kingdom is spoken of in the Scriptures variously, in reference to its several aspects : *first*, in this world, as affecting the individual disciple in whose heart it is set up, as affecting the churches whom it gathers, and as influencing human society generally, even when not brought into the Christian church ; and, *next*, as extending from this world, through the judgment-day, when it will be universally acknowledged, into the heavenly world, where it will reach its crowning glory. John the Baptist was its herald. . . . The Millennium and the judgment are stages in its continuous progress ; and the consummation of the mediatorial kingdom is described in 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28. Some texts in which the phrase (kingdom of heaven) is used, refer mainly to one stage, and others to another, of its onward course." (*Family Testament, with Notes*, Matt. iii. 2.)

Such, then, was the *Origin* of Christ's Kingdom on earth : it commenced with the ministry of John the Baptist. It was not in existence *before* John, for the prophets had foretold that it should be established *then*. Nor was it set up *after* John, for Jesus himself said that the time was *then* fulfilled, and the Kingdom

of God (*engike*) had come. (Mark i. 14, 15.) *Then* the kingdom of heaven was preached both by John and Jesus. *Then* men pressed into it, and took it by force. *Then* the terms of admission were established. *Then* the rite of initiation was fixed. *Then* its fundamental laws were enacted. In short, it was *then* fully set up on earth, with its subjects, laws, ordinances, and King. Yet this kingdom did not come in *all its power and glory* until Christ ascended the mediatorial throne in heaven, and sent down "the promise of the Father." (See Matt. xxviii. 18; Mark ix. 1; Acts ii. 14-36.) Then was he publicly and solemnly inaugurated as Lord of lords and King of kings. And then was completely fulfilled the word of the LORD by David (Ps. ii. 16): "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion."

### III. THE PROGRESS OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM ON EARTH.

As before remarked, this kingdom commenced with the first convert immersed by John the Baptist, and, like the mustard seed, it grew with every additional convert thus baptized. It progressed rapidly under the short ministry of the earnest Baptist. (Matt. iii. 5, 6.) But "Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples.)" John iv. 1, 2. And the apostles made and baptized still more disciples than John or Jesus. For instance, on the day of Pentecost about three thousand souls were formally and visibly inducted into this

kingdom by baptism on a profession of their faith in Christ, preparatory to church membership (Acts ii. 41); and within a few days the number of baptized believers in Jerusalem increased to about five thousand men and women. (Acts ii. 57; iv. 4; v. 14.) "And they went forth and preached every-where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." (Mark xvi. 20.)

Thus the Kingdom of Christ grew and multiplied under the ministry of John and of Jesus and of the apostles, until it was established in every known land. Thus it has continued to extend and increase, with varying success, from that day until the present. And thus it shall continue to advance, with increasing rapidity, until "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (Dan. vii. 27); and until great voices in heaven shall be heard, saying: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever." (Rev. xi. 15.) "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" as mediator (John iii. 35), and "he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (1 Cor. xv. 25, 26.)

Now, the Kingdom of Christ is one and the same both in heaven and on earth, but it exists at present in *two states*: as a state of *grace*, and a state of *glory*.

In its broadest sense, it comprehends *all the saved*, living and dead ; and it will embrace at the final judgment the sacramental host of God's elect. But this kingdom exists on earth in *two forms*: internal and external, or invisible and visible. In its *internal* form, it includes all those in whose hearts Christ reigns by the Holy Spirit through faith, whether they have been baptized and added to Gospel churches or not. When a penitent sinner receives Christ as his Savior and submits to him as his Sovereign, that instant, and in that very act, the reign of heaven is established *in his heart*. But in its *external* form, the Kingdom of Christ includes only those who have been Scripturally baptized on a profession of their faith. As before shown, this kingdom in its *visible* form commenced with the first penitent believer immersed by John the Baptist, and it has increased and multiplied with every additional convert thus baptized down to the present day. And, according to prophecy, it is destined to become a great mountain, filling the whole earth, and to break in pieces and consume all human kingdoms ; and it shall stand forever. (See Dan. ii. 35, 44.)

#### IV. THE TERMS OF ADMISSION INTO CHRIST'S VISIBLE KINGDOM.

1. *Repentance toward God* is a term of admission into this kingdom. John the Baptist enjoined repentance upon all, saying : "*Repent ye*, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand ;" literally, has come. (Matt. iii. 2.) And he positively refused to baptize any without

satisfactory evidences of having repented. "When he saw the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them : O, generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance* ; and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father," etc. (Matt. iii. 7-9 ; Comp. Luke iii. 7, 8.)

Our Lord preached the same doctrine, and required all to repent of their sins, preparatory to entering his kingdom. (See Mark i. 14, 15.) And he solemnly warned sinners, saying : " Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke xiii. 3, 5.) The apostles also, both before and after the crucifixion of Christ, urged all men to repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance, saying : " God now commandeth all men every-where to repent ;" assuring them, that " God is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (See Mark vi. 12 ; Act xvii. 30 ; xxvi. 20 ; 2 Pet. iii. 9.) So all the sacred writers taught.

2. *Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ* is a term of admission into Christ's Kingdom. " Then said Paul : John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should *believe* on Him that should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." (Acts xix. 4.) The Savior required faith as an indispensable condition of admittance into his kingdom ; and he expressly declares, that " he that believeth not, shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 16.) And the apostles every-where, and on all occasions, urged the necessity of faith in Christ, in order to admission into his

kingdom ; “testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts xx. 21 ; Comp. Acts xvi. 30 ; Rom. x. 4, 10.)

Now, prayer, in connection with repentance and faith, is necessary to admission into Christ’s Kingdom. Repentance and faith always and necessarily include prayer as a means to an end ; for no sinner can repent and believe to the saving of his soul without divine grace, and that grace is promised and obtained in answer to prayer. Hence it is that penitential and believing prayer is made an indispensable means of salvation. Accordingly, the prophets, apostles, and Jesus Christ himself unite in urging both the duty and necessity of such prayer upon all men. (See Isa. lv. 6, 7 ; Jer. xxix. 12, 13 ; Matt. vii. 7, 8 ; Acts ii. 21 ; Rom. x. 12, 13.) Nor is there a single promise of salvation to any sinner, without prayer either expressed or implied. And this requirement is as reasonable as it is Scriptural. It is preposterous to suppose that God would grant the blessings of salvation to a prayerless sinner ! The experience of every Christian, as well as the Bible, is against such a supposition. Prayer is the breath of penitence and the voice of faith, crying for mercy in the name of Jesus, saying : “ *God be merciful to me a sinner.*” And the true penitent, prompted by his felt wants, would pray in heart, if he were dumb.

3. *Baptism on a credible profession of faith* is a term of admission into Christ’s *visible* kingdom. By repentance and faith, including prayer, we obtain the *spirit-*

*ual qualifications* requisite for membership in this kingdom. Nor can any one be a *real* member of it, except he first be regenerated, justified, pardoned, and adopted. The Kingdom of Christ is not one of mere *outward forms*. As it is written: "Except a man be *born again*, he can not see (or enjoy) the Kingdom of God" (John iii. 3); and this birth is effected by the agency of the Holy Spirit and the instrumentality of the truth believed, independent of and prior to baptism and all other outward acts of obedience. In proof of this, see John i. 11, 13; 1 Cor. iv. 15; vi. 11; 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14; Titus iii. 4-7; James i. 18; 1 Pet. i. 1, 22, 23. Christ's subjects *obey* him because they *love* him; and no person who does not *love* and *trust* him with all the heart, and who does not possess the *spirit* of obedience to him, is a fit subject for his kingdom. Others, like Simon the sorcerer, may formally enter it by baptism, but they are in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and can never enter the kingdom of glory, except they repent.

But something more than the new birth is necessary to constitute us members of Christ's *visible* kingdom. We must be "*born of water*," or baptized, as well as born of the Spirit and Word of God, in order to "*enter into*" this kingdom, and enjoy the privileges of citizenship. In the language of the late Dr. A. C. DAYTON, we say: "Christ, as King, has appointed a *visible door* of entrance into his visible kingdom. Those who would be subjects of it must first be made such *in their hearts*; and then, when they have been thus duly and truly prepared, they may and must

be *initiated* by the ceremony which HE has appointed. They have ceased to *love* the world in their hearts, and now they must openly come out *from* the world, and acknowledge subjection to him in the *form* and *manner* which he has prescribed. Until they have done this, they may be his subjects *in fact*, but they are not his in *proper form*. They may be his *in heart*, but they do not belong to his *organized* and *visible* kingdom." (*Theodosia*, vol. 2, p. 42.) By repentance and faith, in answer to prayer, we receive that *moral quality of heart* which fits us to "*see*" or *enjoy* this kingdom; and by baptism on a profession of faith, we formally and visibly "*enter into*" it, and become *qualified* for membership in a Gospel church. (See John iii. 3, 5; Acts ii. 38, 41, 47.)

Baptism, then, is the *visible door* of entrance into Christ's Kingdom on earth; and those who have not entered by *this* door are not members of it. To be a member of the Jewish theocracy, a man must not only be an Israelite in heart and by profession, but he must also be *circumcised*; so, to be a member of this new kingdom, a man must not only be "*born again*" of the Holy Spirit and the truth believed, but he must also be "*born of water*," or baptized, as well. Baptism is the divinely appointed rite of *initiation* into Christ's visible kingdom, and it *manifests* or gives *visibility* to his subjects. Thus Jesus himself was "*made manifest to Israel*" as the Messiah and Son of God (John i. 31-34), and publicly inducted into his own kingdom; and thus he has left us an example, that we should follow in his steps, in fulfillment of all right-

eousness. (Matt. iii. 15.) Being the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, it is our first public duty to “*put on Christ*” by this beautiful and significant ordinance, and thus be “made manifest” to all as his followers. (Gal. iii. 26, 27.) Hence we see that the visible Kingdom of Christ *consists of professed believers who have been baptized*, and it embraces *none others*; for baptism on a credible profession of faith is a fixed and unalterable term of admission into it.

Such, then, are the *terms* of admission into Christ’s Kingdom on earth: 1, Repentance toward God; 2, Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and, 3, Baptism on a credible profession of faith in Christ.

## V. THE RELATION SUBSISTING BETWEEN CHRIST’S KINGDOM AND CHURCHES.

What is this relation? We answer:

1. *That they are not identical, though intimately connected.*

The words *kingdom* and *church* occur in the New Testament more than 100 times each, but they are never employed as synonymous in a single instance. The kingdom and churches of Christ are essentially distinct both in their nature and polity, and it is a gross perversion of Scripture to use them interchangeably. The Kingdom of Christ is a pure *monarchy*, utterly destitute of administrative authority; while the churches of Christ are pure *democracies*, possessing the sole executive power in his kingdom. The kingdom may and will be *universal*, but the churches

are necessarily *local*, embracing only their respective members.

Now, the word *church* (see *Missile* No. IV. pp. 186–198) has two, and only two, religious significations—a *figurative* and a *literal*; the former being used to denote all the redeemed in heaven and on earth, and the latter to denote local congregations of baptized believers, voluntarily associated together in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel. In its figurative use, therefore, the word is more comprehensive than the visible kingdom, embracing all the saved, living and dead; but in its literal sense, it is less comprehensive than the kingdom, embracing only visible congregations of baptized believers. Hence it is evident that the churches and kingdom of Christ, though intimately connected as parts to the whole, *are not identical*, and it is a great evil to confound them, as do Pedobaptists and others. It was confounding the kingdom *on earth*, in John iii. 3, 5, 12, with the kingdom in glory, that gave birth to Baptismal Regeneration and Infant Baptism; and it was confounding the visible kingdom with an imaginary visible church, that gave rise to the Papal Hierarchy, with its numerous offspring of confederated churches; as, for example, the church of England, the Presbyterian Church, the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, etc.

2. *The visible Kingdom of Christ includes all his churches.*

A person must first be a citizen of Christ's visible kingdom before he can properly and truly be a mem-

ber of a visible church of Christ in that kingdom ; justasaman must first be a citizen of a State before he can legally or properly be a member of a court of justice in that State. The moment a professed penitènt believer is buried with Christ by baptism and raised in the likeness of his resurrection, that instant and by that act he becomes a citizen of Christ's visible kingdom, and is *qualified* for church membership. But he is not a member of any church, though a citizen of the kingdom, until he is received into fellowship by the *vote* of some church ; as in the case of the *Ethiopian eunuch*, Acts viii. 38. *For illustration* : an education inducts a man into the company of educated persons, and *fits* him for a professorship in some college, yet it does not make him a professor in any college : so, baptism on a credible profession of faith inducts an individual into the company of Christ's visible followers, and *qualifies* him for church-membership, but it does not constitute him a member of any church. As the vote of a board of trustees elects or rejects from a professorship in a particular institution, so the vote of a church confers or deprives of membership in its body. Baptism, therefore, is the *visible door* of entrance into the visible kingdom of Christ, and an *indispensable qualification* for membership in a visible church of Christ, but it does not *confer* membership in any Gospel church.

Accordingly, Dr. DAYTON says : "The kingdom may be *universal*. The kingdom includes *all* the churches. The *visible* kingdom includes all who have professed faith in Christ and been baptized,

even though they may not be members of any church. The Ethiopian officer was *in the kingdom* when he and Philip came up out of the water, but he had not yet united with any church." (*Theodosia*, vol. 2. p. 127.) Hence we see that Christ's visible kingdom includes all his churches, together with all baptized believers not members of any church; just as a State includes all its courts of law, together with all its private citizens; and the one is no more identical than the other. The churches, therefore, are not the kingdom, nor is the kingdom the churches; but the churches are *executive and judicial bodies in the kingdom*, just as the courts of justice are within the State—making a part of the State, authorized and governed by the laws of the State, and transacting business for the State, but not constituting the State. Still, it is both the duty and privilege of every citizen of Christ's visible kingdom to become and continue a member of a church of Christ; for it is only as a *church-member* that he can participate in the business of the kingdom, or partake of the Lord's Supper.

3. *Christ's churches are the sole executives in his kingdom.*

As we have seen, the churches of Christ are all *in his visible kingdom*, composed of citizens of the kingdom, constituting *a part* of the kingdom, and subject to the *laws* of the kingdom; but they are not *identical* with the kingdom itself, any more than the courts of law and executive of a State are themselves identical with the State. They are *local* organizations in the kingdom, charged with the execution of its laws and the

administration of its ordinances; and, as such, they are the *permanent executive and judicial bodies* of the kingdom, subject only to the King and his laws. As *executive* bodies, they approve and baptize converts, receive or reject members, elect and ordain officers, send out and support missionaries, celebrate the Lord's Supper, and provide for the regular and stated worship of God. As *judicial* bodies, they settle difficulties between the members, exclude disorderly and immoral persons, restore the penitent, condemn error and errorists, and do whatever is necessary to preserve the peace and purity of their membership.

The churches of Christ are not only the permanent executive and judicial bodies of his kingdom, but they are the *sole executives*, to whom alone his laws and ordinances are committed for administration and enforcement. (See *Missile* No. II. pp. 75-78, and *Missile* No. IV. pp. 212-218.) The exclusive right to approve and induct penitent believers into Christ's Kingdom by baptism, as well as the whole matter of discipline, formative and corrective, is vested *in the churches as such*, and not in church officers. To these executive and judicial bodies, *as such*, and to them *alone*, has Christ intrusted the visible administration of his kingdom on earth; and no diocesan bishop, minister in charge, or church-session has any divine right to usurp this church prerogative.

On this point the New Testament is sufficiently clear and full; and all true Baptists, at least, see eye to eye and speak the same thing. With us, as with the inspired apostles, the churches are the highest eccle-

siastical authority under Christ, and the sole executives in his kingdom. Our district and general associations, our conventions and councils, are mere *advisory* bodies formed for educational, missionary, and Sunday-school purposes, and possess no ecclesiastical or legislative power whatever. They are the creatures of the churches; they may advise, but can not coerce.

Such, then, is the *relation* subsisting between the kingdom and churches of Christ: 1, They are not identical, though intimately connected; 2, The visible Kingdom of Christ includes all his churches; and, 3, The churches of Christ are the sole executives in his kingdom on earth.

Having briefly explained the Nature, Origin, and the Progress of Christ's Kingdom, and shown the Terms of admission into it, and the Relation subsisting between the kingdom and churches of Christ, we close with a few

### PRACTICAL DEDUCTIONS.

Hence we learn,

1. *That the Kingdom of Christ is a subject of transcendent importance.*

John the Baptist announced its establishment, and called upon men to repent and believe, preparatory to entering it by baptism. And having thus made ready a people, prepared for the coming Messiah, and having publicly inducted the King into his own kingdom by baptism, John was willing thenceforth to decrease, while Christ and his kingdom should increase. After

John was imprisoned, Jesus continued to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom, and urged the duties of repentance and faith by motives drawn from the nature of his kingdom; while he pronounced the poor in spirit *blessed*, because "theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And the apostles went into all the world, "preaching the kingdom of God," and "testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

Correct views of Christ's Kingdom are essential to a right understanding of the Gospel. In fact, this kingdom is the embodiment of the Gospel itself. Hence it was the burden of prophetic messages; the signal of Messiah's advent; the first lesson taught by the Great Teacher; and the theme of apostolic preaching. Many of the parables of our Lord were expressly designed to illustrate the nature, power, and progress of his kingdom. (See Matt. 13th chap.) And Jesus took special pains, both in public and private, to teach his disciples "*the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*," that they might be prepared to teach others also.

2. *That the Kingdom of Christ is greatly misunderstood and perverted by many.*

The Pedobaptists confound the kingdom of grace with the kingdom of glory; and as baptism is essential to admission into the former in its visible state, they make it essential to admission into the latter. Hence it is that they attach a saving efficacy to the ordinance, and with this view administer it to *infants*, as well as to adults. This was one of the first radical errors embraced by the Christian Fathers of the third and fourth

centuries. (See *Hinton's History of Baptism*, pp. 299–311.) The early Fathers were led into this error by a false interpretation of John iii. 5; and it was the *root* of Baptismal Regeneration, Baptismal Remission, and Infant Baptism, as held at the present day.

Pedobaptists also confound the visible kingdom of Christ with a *supposed* “universal visible church;” and hence they maintain that “*there is no ordinary possibility of salvation*” out of this church or kingdom. On this point the *Presbyterian Confession of Faith* expresses the sentiments of all Pedobaptists. In chap. xxv. sec. 2, it says: “*The visible church which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world who profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.*”

The Campbellites generally hold both these errors, except in regard to infants; and hence the undue stress which they lay on baptism and church-membership. The founder and first ministers of Campbellism were all Pedobaptists, and brought these errors with them. And, unfortunately, some Baptists have incautiously adopted Campbellite and Pedobaptist phraseology on these points, and hence the world imagines that we hold the same errors in regard to Christ's Kingdom.

3. *That valid baptism is essential to admission into Christ's visible kingdom and to church-membership.*

Baptism, to be valid, must be scriptural in its mode,

its subjects, its design, and its administrator; and such baptism can be found only in Baptist churches. (See *Missile* No. II. pp. 171, 172.) Scriptural ordination is essential to the valid administration of the ordinance; and none but regular Baptist churches can confer such ordination. All admit that an *apostate* church is not a church of Christ, and, therefore, can not confer valid baptism and ordination. The Roman Catholic church is confessedly an apostate church, and all Protestant Pedobaptists received their baptism and ordination from that church. Therefore, Protestant Pedobaptists are destitute of valid baptism and ordination; and, consequently, they are not in the visible Kingdom of Christ, though many of them are fit subjects for baptism.

Now, all agree that valid baptism is indispensable to visible church-membership; and if Pedobaptists be destitute of such baptism, they are not members of Gospel churches. As we have shown, all Christ's churches are *in* his kingdom, and composed of citizens *of* that kingdom; and if Pedobaptists be not in Christ's Kingdom, they can not be his churches. They may be subjects of his kingdom *in heart*, and, as such, fit subjects for admission; but, being destitute of valid baptism, they are neither members of the kingdom, nor members of Gospel churches. And this, in fact, is the great reason why Baptists can not and ought not to inter-commune with them at the Lord's Table; for it is a *church* ordinance, as all admit, and none but church-members have a right to partake of it.

The same is true of the Campbellites. They are equally destitute of valid baptism, and, therefore, are neither in Christ's Kingdom, nor members of Gospel churches.

4. *That it is the immediate duty of penitent believers to enter Christ's visible kingdom and to unite with a Gospel church.*

By repentance and faith we become the subjects of Christ's Kingdom *in heart*, and by baptism we formally "*enter into*" it, and become *qualified* for church-membership. Of this kingdom in its external form, whether proclaimed by John, by Jesus, or by the apostles, baptism was ever the *initiatory* rite. The law requiring it is fundamental, binding the King and his subjects alike. Jesus, *as Man*, was subject to all the laws and ordinances of his kingdom. Hence, he asked and obtained baptism at the hands of John, in fulfillment of all righteousness, as the *pattern* of his people. Thus he was publicly *initiated* into his own kingdom, and *manifested* to Israel as the Mediatorial King (Matt. iii. 13-17; John i. 31-34); and, therefore, proclamation of the fact was immediately made by the Father. His entrance *into the kingdom* by baptism, which was his *duty* as the Man Christ Jesus, was his entrance upon *royalty*, which was his *right* as the beloved Son of God.

Now, all who have received Christ by faith as their Savior, and submitted to him in heart as their Sovereign, are fit subjects for admission into his visible kingdom. Jesus reigns in the hearts of such by his Holy Spirit, and they will finally reign with him in

glory, even though they may not be permitted to enter his kingdom on earth; as do the Old Testament saints, the thief converted on the cross, and many others under the New Testament dispensation. Still, it is the immediate duty of all penitent believers, Providence permitting, to be buried with Christ by baptism, and raised again to walk in newness of life. Indeed, they must submit to this initiatory rite of the kingdom, and take the oath of allegiance to the King, before they can enjoy the privileges of citizenship and unite with a Gospel church. Nor can any neglect this duty without incurring guilt and suffering loss. So important is this duty, that the apostles baptized converts the same hour of the night in which they believed. (See Acts xvi. 30-34.) As soon as the Pentecostian inquirers repented and believed, they were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ; and the same day they were added to the church. (Acts ii. 37-41.) Admission into the kingdom by baptism always has reference to becoming church-members, and all baptized believers should at once unite with some Gospel church.

5. *That the Kingdom of Christ established under the ministry of John the Baptist is an everlasting kingdom.*

We have shown (pages 159-165) that Christ's visible kingdom was set up under John's ministry, which is denominated "the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." (Mark i. 1.) It commenced with the first penitent believer immersed by John, and it increased with every additional convert thus baptized. Then it suffered violence, and then the violent

took it by force. Both John and Jesus testify that it had come, and was then established. None will deny this, except those who have some favorite theory to support.

But while the Kingdom of Christ commenced with the ministry of John the Baptist, still it is *an everlasting kingdom*. The Bible clearly teaches that this kingdom, in its various stages, shall endure forever. Only a few of the many passages on this point can be given here. *As it is written*: “Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.” (Ps. 145: 13.) “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” (Isa. ix. 6, 7.) “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” (Luke i. 32, 33.) “But unto the Son he saith: Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom.” (Heb. i. 18.) “For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Pet. i. 11.)

Such is but a *specimen* of the teachings of the Scriptures in regard to the *duration* of Christ's Kingdom. It is an *everlasting* kingdom—shall have *no end*, and shall *endure forever and ever*. The Millennium and the final judgment are but *stages* in the outward progress of this kingdom; and the consummation of its glory is described in 1 Cor. xv. 24–28, where we learn that when the end for which the Father gave the mediatorial kingdom to the Son is fully accomplished, then its present form will be changed, and Christ will cease to reign as Mediator, because no longer necessary; but his kingdom in its glorified form will continue forever. And this is clearly what is meant by the “*end*” spoken of in verse 24, when Jesus shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father. It does not mean the end of Christ's Kingdom, for that is *everlasting*; but simply the end of this probationary state, and, consequently, the end of his mediatorial reign. “And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself (as Mediator) be subject unto him that put all things under him, *that God may be all in all*” (verse 28); that is, THE TRI-UNE GOD, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, will thenceforth govern the universe, not through a Mediator, but *directly*, as from the beginning, *that Divinity may be all in all*; while the GOD-MAN-MEDIATOR will be worshiped and adored by holy angels and redeemed saints through ceaseless ages. The everlasting song will be: “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood—to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” Rev. i. 5, 6.

Accordingly, ANDREW FULLER remarks: "The *end* of which Paul speaks does not mean the end of Christ's Kingdom, but of the world, and the things thereof. 'The delivering up of the kingdom to the Father' will not put an *end* to it, but eternally establish it in a new and more glorious form. Christ shall not cease to reign, though the mode of his administration be different. As a divine person, he will be always one with the Father; and though his mediatorial kingdom shall cease, yet the *effects* of it will remain forever. There will never be a period in duration in which the Redeemer of sinners will be thrown into the shade, or become of less account than he now is, or in which honor, and glory, and blessing will cease to be ascribed to him by the whole creation." (*Fuller's Works*, vol. i., p. 678.)

# MISSILES OF TRUTH.

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## MISSILE NO. IV.

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### IDENTITY OF APOSTOLIC AND BAPTIST CHURCHES.

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AN ESSAY REVISED AND PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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#### INTRODUCTION.

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#### § THE WORD CHURCH DEFINED AND EXPLAINED.

OUR English word *church* is so indefinite in common use, that it becomes necessary first to define and explain the term, in order to understand its scriptural import. It is sometimes applied to a *house* of worship, and sometimes to the worshipers themselves. Sometimes it is employed to denote a local assembly of professed Christians, and sometimes to denote a whole denomination, embracing many local congregations, and extending over one or more countries; as, for example, the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England, the Protestant Episcopal Church of America, the Presbyterian Church of the United States, or the Methodist Episcopal Church, North and South. Protestant Pedobaptists generally use the term to denote

“all those throughout the world who profess the true religion, together with their children.” (See *Presbyterian Confession of Faith*, chap. 25, sec. 2.) Hence the necessity of determining the scriptural meaning of the word as given in the original Greek, and taught by Christ and his inspired apostles. Let us, then, briefly examine,

1. *The meaning of the original word ekklesia as employed by the ancient Greeks.*

The word rendered *church* in our English Bible is *ekklesia* in the original Greek, and means an *assembly* or *congregation*. The word *ekklesia* was derived from the word *ekkaleo*, which signifies *to call out from*, or *to call together*. The government of the ancient cities of Greece was *democratic*, and was administered by qualified citizens *in a lawful assembly*, called together from time to time for the public welfare. The meetings were convened by the city-crier, and, when thus convened and properly organized, constituted the *Greek ekklesia*; that is, the assembly of chosen citizens, legally called together for the transaction of public business. It was not merely an assembly, but an *official* assembly, consisting of persons specially qualified, and duly called together, and who had each his duties and rights as a member of the *ekklesia*. Nor was every citizen a member of this official body, to which was intrusted the management of public affairs; but the *ekklesia* consisted of those only who were *called out* from the mass of the people, to deliberate and act for the public good.

True, in Acts 19: 31, the word seems to have been

applied to a disorderly and promiscuous assembly ; but, strictly speaking, the term could properly be applied only to a lawful assembly of chosen and qualified citizens, when convened and organized for public business. Having, then, ascertained the origin and use of the word *ekklesia*, and the established meaning which it had among the Greeks, when our Lord appropriated it to a religious use, let us notice,

2. *The meaning of the word ekklesia as applied by Christ to his first church.*

As we have seen, this word had a definite and fixed meaning among the Greeks before our Savior adopted and applied it to his first church in Matt. 16:18 ; a meaning as distinct and as well settled as that of any other Greek word, and hence its primary and true meaning can be learned only from the original. Now, in selecting and using this term to designate his first church, Jesus must have had special regard to its original signification, otherwise there would have been no propriety in its application, and it would have been misleading. He must, therefore, have employed the word to denote an *assembly* ; and this assembly must have consisted of chosen and qualified citizens of his kingdom, who had been divinely *called out from the world*, and properly organized into an *ekklesia*, or church, for religious purposes. Hence Christ's *ekklesia* or church could be no other than an *official assembly*, to which his laws and ordinances were committed for administration and enforcement. It was a local assembly of *his* disciples, meeting in *his* name, invoking *his* blessing, and doing business by *his* au-

thority. In short, it was an *executive* and *judicial* body in Christ's visible kingdom, to which an offended brother might go and tell his grievance; and whose decision in the case should be final. (See Matt. 18: 15-18.) And this church was unquestionably designed to be the *model* of all Christ's churches, and the first of a continuous *succession* of churches to the end of time; as is evident from his promise: "And, lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28: 20.) Notice,

3. *The Scriptural meaning of the word Church as used by the inspired Apostles.*

Now, in order to obtain a correct idea of the scriptural meaning and use of the word church, we must examine the various passages where it occurs. The word *ekklesia*, rendered church in our English version, occurs 116 times in the New Testament; 80 in the singular number, and 36 in the plural. In three passages it is translated *assembly*, referring to the riotous and tumultuous assembly at Ephesus, and has no reference to a Gospel church. (See Acts 19: 32, 39, 41.) Then it is used twice with reference to the "*congregation of Israel*" (Acts 7: 38, and Heb. 2: 12; Comp. Ps. 22: 22), where the word can not denote a church of Christ, and ought to have been rendered assembly or nation. That was indeed "an assembly in the wilderness"—an organized and rebellious assembly; but it was *no church of Christ*. Every assembly was not an *ekklesia*, nor was every *ekklesia* a Gospel church. Christ himself organized his *first ekklesia*, as the *model* or *pattern* of all Gospel churches.

The word is also applied once to heathen *temples* of worship in general. (Acts 19: 37.)

We have now *one hundred and ten* passages remaining in which the word *ekklesia* is used either *figuratively* or *literally* to designate Christ's church or churches. The following are all the passages where the word is so used in the New Testament, viz.:

(1.) *In the singular number*, Matt. 16: 18; 18: 17; Acts 2: 47; 5: 11; 8: 1, 3; 11: 22, 26; 12: 1, 5; 13: 1; 14: 23, 27; 15: 3, 4, 22; 18: 22; 20: 17, 28; Rom. 16: 1, 5, 23; 1 Cor. 1: 2; 4: 17; 6: 4; 10: 32; 11: 18, 22; 12: 28; 14: 4, 5, 12, 19, 23, 28, 35; 15: 9; 16: 19; 2 Cor. 1: 1; Gal. 1: 13; Eph. 3: 10, 21; 5: 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32; Phil. 3: 6; 4: 15; Col. 1: 18, 24; 4: 15, 16; 1 Thess. 1: 1; 2 Thess. 1: 1; 1 Tim. 3: 5, 15; 5: 16; Philem. 2; Heb. 12: 23; James 5: 14; 1 Pet. 5: 13; 3 John 6, 9, 10; Rev. 2: 1, 8, 12, 18; 3: 1, 7, 14. *Total*, 75.

(2.) *In the plural number*, Acts 9: 31; 15: 41; 16: 5; Rom. 16: 4, 16; 1 Cor. 7: 17; 11: 16; 14: 33, 34; 16: 1, 19; 2 Cor. 8: 1, 18, 19, 23, 24; 11: 8, 28; 12: 13; Gal. 1: 2, 22; 1 Thess. 2: 14; 2 Thess. 1: 4; Rev. 1: 4, 11, 20; 2: 7, 11, 17, 23, 29; 3: 6, 13, 22; 22: 16. *Total*, 35.

From these pages we learn, that the word church has *two*, and only two, distinct significations—a *figurative* and a *literal*. It is used figuratively to denote *all the saved, living and dead, together with all who shall be saved*; as in Eph. 1: 22; 3: 10, 21; 5: 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32; Col. 1: 18, 24; Heb. 12: 23. Here

we have *twelve* instances in which the word church is evidently used *figuratively* to embrace the whole elect of God, "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world"—the church which Christ loved and died to redeem—"the whole family in heaven and earth"—the spiritual body of which Christ is the Head—"the general assembly and church of the first born, who are written in heaven."

Now, the word church, as used in these passages, can not be restricted to visible churches, *as such*, much less to a supposed "universal visible church." Christ loved and gave himself for each and every member of his spiritual body or church, and all its members will be finally saved, though many of them may never belong to any visible church. This church embraces the patriarchs, prophets, and all the pious of every age and dispensation, together with those who have died in infancy; and hence it is *universal*. There are some in visible churches who do not belong to this church, and will doubtless be lost. It is purely a *spiritual* body, embracing none but the regenerate, and hence it is *invisible*, its members being known only to God; and, as such, it has no ordinances, no visible organization, and never did, and never will, meet on earth till the final judgment.

*True*, every visible church of Christ ought to be composed exclusively of regenerated persons—members of his spiritual body. A primary qualification for membership in a visible church, consists in first being a member of this invisible church, or spiritual body, by faith in Christ Jesus. Every visible church of

Christ was designed to be a *miniature representative* of his spiritual body or church. Hence the same figures are sometimes employed to denote the one as the other; and in every case the application of these figures must be determined by the connection. Both the invisible and visible churches of Christ are styled *his body*, under the figure of the human body. Yet these churches are essentially distinct.

But there are *ninety-eight* passages in the New Testament where the word church unquestionably denotes *visible congregations* of baptized believers, voluntarily associated together in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel for religious purposes. In most of these passages the word so obviously signifies *local assemblies* of Christ's disciples, that it is unnecessary to examine them separately. There are a few passages, however, which need some explanation and qualification; as Matt. 16: 18; Acts 20: 28; 1 Cor. 10: 32; 12: 28; 14: 19; 15: 9; Gal. 1: 13; Phil. 3: 6; 1 Tim. 3: 5, 15. Let us briefly examine these *ten* passages in their connection. We will notice,

1. Matthew 16: 18; compare 18: 15-20, and Acts 1: 14-26; 2: 41, 47. The key to the true interpretation of this passage is found in the phrases, "*this rock—my church—and the gates of hell.*" What, then, is the meaning of the phrase, "*this rock?*" Having first asked his disciples what men generally said about him, Jesus inquired what *they* thought of him, saying: "But whom say *ye* that I am?" Without waiting to consult the others, Peter answered: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." *This* was what

he believed. This was the confession of *his faith*. This confession had indeed been made before, but never to express a conviction so deep and spiritual as now ; thus marking the gradual development of the faith of the disciples in their Lord. It embodied the *foundation truth* of the gospel—the *Messiahship and Divinity of Christ*. Hence it called forth a blessing on Simon, as having spoken by the express revelation of the Father ; and Jesus replied : “ Thou art Peter (*Petros*, the masculine form of the Greek word for *rock*), and upon *this rock* (*Petra*, the feminine form of the same word) I will build my church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

It is highly probable that Peter's name suggested the comparison ; but if Jesus had meant that he would build his *ekklesia*, or first church, upon *Peter himself*, he would not have changed the gender of the original word from the masculine to the feminine. It is true that Peter was one of the *first stones* laid in that spiritual temple of which he himself declares that all believers are “living stones.” (1 Pet. 2 : 5.) It is true that he was one of the “master-builders” of this holy temple (1 Cor. 3 : 10), and one of the inspired founders and instructors of Christ's churches, which are built upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, “*Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.*” (Eph. 2 : 20.) And it is true that Peter was one of “the twelve apostles of the Lamb,” whose names are to be inscribed on the “twelve foundations” of the new Jerusalem. (Rev. 22 : 10.) But it is not true that he ever was the foundation itself of any church.

Now, the meaning of the phrase "*this rock*," here, is evidently this: Upon the *foundation truth* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, as believed and confessed by Peter, Christ had established and was building up his *first ekklesia, or church*; and upon the same great truth thus believed and confessed by others, he would found and build all his successive churches. The word "*build*," here, is manifestly used in the sense of *build up*, as in 1 Pet. 2: 5. The concurrent testimony, both of prophecy and the New Testament, points to Christ alone as THE ROCK of human hope, and the only foundation of his churches. (See Isa. 28: 16; Acts 4: 11, 12; Rom. 9: 33; 1 Cor. 3: 11; 1 Pet. 2: 4; Rev. 21: 14.) We are built upon this divine and sure foundation by *faith*; and the hope based upon the belief of this *central truth*, and the church founded upon *this rock*, will stand amid the flames of bitter persecution and the ravages of cruel death—"the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." But as the foundation of a building is first laid, and the superstructure then reared upon it: so faith in Christ as the Messiah and Son of God must first be exercised, and then confession and baptism must follow, in order to membership in a visible church of Christ. All this Peter had done, and now repeats the confession.

We are now prepared to understand the Savior when he said: "Upon this rock I will build *my church*." This is the first recorded instance where Jesus employed the Greek word *ekklesia* to designate his church or *ekklesia*. Henceforth this was to be

the *distinctive title* of each of all his churches: just as the name *court* or *jury* is the distinctive title of all courts and juries. (See *Theodosia*, vol. 2, p. 100.) But as a real court or jury must have existed *before* the name could be properly applied, so a *real church of Christ* must have existed before he denominated it *his ekklesia*. It was a veritable church when Jesus here applied the name to it, and not merely an impersonal institution. This church dates back to the days of John the Baptist, when three pious fishermen gathered around the Savior, forming the *nucleus* of his first church (See John 1: 35-42; 3: 29); and though it was in a *migratory* state for more than two years, still it was none the less a church of Christ. During all this time, it was growing in knowledge and numbers under the personal care and instruction of the Great Shepherd; and was thus being fitted for its peculiar work as the permanent *executive* and *judiciary* of Christ's kingdom.

Now, this church was pre-eminently *Christ's* church, for he himself had founded and taught it, and would continue to build it up and multiply it. It was his *first* church, designed as the *model* or *pattern* of all his churches to the end of time; and hence he could properly and truly say, that he would *build his successive churches* upon the same foundation on which he was building his first and model church. Christ himself is indeed the architect or builder of all his churches, while he employs the Holy Spirit and subordinate agents in preparing the material and in erecting these spiritual edifices. The apostles were constituent mem-

bers of this first church ; and, as the inspired founders and instructors of other churches, they modeled all after this divine pattern : “ teaching them to observe all things whatsoever Christ had commanded them.” (Matt. 28 : 19.)

This view of the passage is confirmed by Matt. 18 : 15-20, which contains the fundamental law of church discipline. From the previous passage we learned, that Christ himself organized his *first ekklesia* or church as the model of all his churches, and that it was composed exclusively of professed believers in him as the Messiah and Son of God ; but we had no intimation of the *objects* which it was designed to accomplish. In this passage our Lord teaches that one great object was, to preserve the harmony and purity of its membership by a watchful and wholesome church discipline. He here plainly points out the steps to be taken in case of personal difficulties between church-members. The aggrieved brother must first seek redress by a private interview with the offender. If this fail, he must take one or two others with him as helps and witnesses, and make a second effort to settle the difficulty. And if this fail, he must “ *tell it to the church,*” and if he neglect to “ *hear the church,*” then he must be excommunicated. Here the matter ends. When the church has decided, the question is settled. There is no appeal. The church is supreme, and her decision is final, even though she may consist of but two or three members gathered together in Christ’s name, governed by his laws, and seeking his guidance. (Verses 18-20.) No power but her own can reverse her

decision. Christ himself is King, and his churches are the *sole executives* in his kingdom.

But Acts 1: 14-26, and 2: 41, 47, shed a flood of light on this subject. Hitherto the King himself was personally present with his bride or church, acting as the *sole executive* in his kingdom; and having thoroughly instructed and trained his *ekklesia* to become *his permanent executive* on earth, he ascended up where he was before. This first and model church of Christ immediately commenced her executive and judicial work under the direction of Peter himself; and her first act, *as a church*, was to elect and ordain Matthias to the apostleship, from which Judas, by transgression, had fallen. (See Acts 1: 15-26.) Luke, in recording this transaction, says: "The number of the *names* together were about a hundred and twenty;" implying that they were *known* and *registered* members of the church, and here acted as such.

For some ten days and nights, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren" (verse 14) until "the day of Pentecost was fully come;" when large numbers were converted and added to the church. Under the preaching of Peter, multitudes repented and believed, and were then baptized; "and the same day there were added unto them (*i. e.* to the 120 disciples or church) about three thousand souls. . . . And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2: 41, 47.) *Now*, this church became *local*, and henceforth was known as "the church which was at Jerusalem."

(Acts 8: 1.) It was then *a local assembly of baptized believers, voluntarily associated together in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, and meeting in Christ's name, to administer his ordinances, execute his laws, and transact the business of his kingdom.* It was indeed the *model church*, after which all other Gospel churches were to be fashioned, but it had no ecclesiastical authority over any other church. When other churches were established at Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, and elsewhere, each of them was as complete and independent as was this first and mother church.

We come next to inquire what is meant here by "*the gates of hell.*" The gates of ancient walled cities were the ordinary places for holding courts, transacting business, and *deliberating* on public affairs. Hence, *gates* came to denote *counsels, machinations, and evil designs.* The word *hell* here means the place of departed spirits, particularly *evil spirits*; and the meaning of the phrase here is that all the *machinations, evil plots, and stratagems* of Satan and his emissaries shall not be able to overcome Christ's churches, or to prevent the final salvation of any true believer in him. Although local churches, as that at Jerusalem, or Antioch, or Ephesus, may cease to exist as organized bodies, still other churches identical in every essential particular have existed elsewhere in all ages, and shall continue to exist and multiply to the end of the world: just as individuals and entire generations of men have died; and still the human race continues to exist and multiply from age to age in their successors.

2. Acts 20: 28; compare verse 17. By "*the*"

*church of God,*" or rather "*the church of the Lord,*" here, Paul evidently meant the church of Christ at Ephesus. He was addressing the "*elders*" or *pastors* of that particular church (see verse 17), and hence his solemn charge to them: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers*, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Now, the Lord Jesus Christ has purchased each one of all his churches with his own blood; and every true believer may say with Paul: "He hath loved me, and given himself for me." (Gal. 2: 20.) This passage, therefore, has direct reference to the church at Ephesus, and can not be applied either to Christ's spiritual body, or invisible church, or to his visible churches taken collectively, much less to "all those throughout the world who profess the true religion, together with their children."

3. 1 Corinthians 10: 32; 12: 28; 14: 19; compare 1: 2. In this first passage, Paul exhorts the members of the church at Corinth to "give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to *the church of God*" (1 Cor. 10: 32.); that is, they should give no just occasion of offense either to the unbelieving Jews, or to the idolatrous Greeks, or to the members of the church to which they belonged. Now, this epistle was addressed to "the church of God which was in Corinth" (1 Cor. 1: 2); and the apostle obviously refers here to that particular church, and to no other. While they should avoid all just cause of offense to the ungodly Jews and Gentiles,

they should especially avoid every thing that would give unnecessary offense to their brethren with whom they sustained church relations.

Again says Paul: "*God hath set some in the church,* first, apostles, secondly, prophets, thirdly, teachers," etc., referring to the different offices established in the first churches. (1 Cor. 12: 28.) The idea here is that God has "set" or established some of these offices *in every church of Christ*, just as he has set the various members in the human body. (See ver. 18.) Some were *extraordinary*, and ceased with the apostles; others were *ordinary*, and continue in the churches. (See Eph. 4: 8-16.) Now, each particular *visible* church of Christ was designed to be a *fac-simile* of his spiritual body or universal *invisible* church, and hence the same figures are employed to represent both. Accordingly, Paul, in verse 27, says to the church at Corinth: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular," *i. e.*, the body of Christ collectively as a church, and members in particular as individuals. Then the apostle adds: "And God hath set some *in the church*, etc.; that is, *in the Corinthian church*, and in each one of all the churches of Christ. He established these offices "*in*" the several churches, not *over* them; and hence those filling these different offices were *subject* to the authority and discipline of the churches to which they belonged, and not lords over God's heritage.

Now, Paul could not mean here that God has set or established these various offices in the spiritual body of Christ, *figuratively* called the church, for that body

has no visible organization, no officers nor ordinances, and it embraces all the redeemed living and dead, in heaven and on earth. Nor could he mean that these offices were established in the *aggregate* of all the visible churches of Christ combined in *one universal visible church*, called "the holy Catholic church." Much less did he mean that God has set these different offices in some *imaginary* "universal visible church, consisting of all those throughout the world who profess the true religion, together with their children;" and that the officers of this general church were constituted independent of and superior to the particular churches, and invested with the discipline and government of the several churches, either as bishops, preachers in charge, sessions, presbyteries, synods, conferences, or other judicatories.

And again Paul says: "Yet *in the church* I had rather speak five words with my understanding," etc. (1 Cor. 14: 19.) "*In the church*;" that is, in any assembly of Christians whom he might address. The remark is general, applying to every church to whom the apostle might preach. He desired to profit his hearers, and hence would not speak to them in an unknown tongue, but in a language they could understand. "The word *church* does not refer to the *edifice* where Christians worshiped, but to the *organized assembly* of Christians."—BARNES.

4. 1 Cor. 15: 9; Gal. 1: 13; Phil. 3: 6. "Because I persecuted *the church of God*"—"beyond measure I persecuted *the church of God*, and wasted it"—"concerning zeal, persecuting *the church*."

These passages all refer to the same thing, and may be best explained together. By "*the church of God*," and "*the church*," here, Paul unquestionably means the church at Jerusalem, for that was the only church which he ever persecuted. He aided and abetted in the martyrdom of Stephen. "And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church," etc. (See Acts 8: 1-3; 9: 1-6.) In hunting down and persecuting the scattered members of that church, Saul was persecuting Christ in his people.

5. 1 Timothy 3: 5, 15. In verse 5 Paul is giving the qualifications of a bishop or pastor, and says: "If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he *take care of the church of God?*" That is, he is unfit to take the pastoral care of a church of Christ.

In verse 15, the apostle gives the *reason* why he wrote Timothy at this time:—"That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself *in the house of God*, which is *the church of the living God*," etc. Timothy was an *evangelist*, and not a pastor. (See 2 Tim. 4: 5.) He was now laboring with the church at Ephesus, where Paul had left him to guard the members against error and errorists (1 Tim. 1: 1-11), and to set in order what was wanting in that infant church. The apostle wrote him from Macedonia, therefore, that he might know how to act and what to teach under the circumstances. He calls this church "*the*

*house of God*," because it was an organized body of baptized believers, gathered together in the name of Christ, who has promised to be in the midst of each of all his churches. (Matt. 18 : 20.) Thus God, in the person of his Son by the Holy Spirit, dwells in every Gospel church, as in his own peculiar house or temple. This passage, then, viewed in the light of facts, unquestionably refers to the church at Ephesus, which was indeed "the church of the living God" in that idolatrous city.

We have now examined all the passages in the New Testament where the word *church* is supposed to be used in a general or indefinite sense, either to denote the *aggregate* of Christ's visible churches taken collectively, or "all those throughout the world who profess the true religion, together with their children," and in not a single instance do we find it used in either sense. But in every case the word is employed to denote *a local assembly of baptized believers, voluntarily associated together in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, and meeting statedly in Christ's name for church business, mutual instruction, and divine worship*; as for example, "the church which was at Jerusalem" (Acts 8 : 1), "the church that was at Antioch" (Acts 13 : 1), or "the church of Ephesus" (Rev. 2 : 1). When the word is used to denote more than one church, it is always in the plural number; as for instance, "the churches of Judea" (Gal. 1 : 22), "the churches of Galatia" (Gal. 1 : 2), "the churches of Asia" (1 Cor. 16 : 19), or "the churches of Macedonia" (2 Cor. 8 : 1).

On the day of Pentecost, "the church which was at Jerusalem" stood alone in the kingdom of Christ on earth. It was peculiarly *his* church, his *first* church, and the *model* after which all his other churches were to be fashioned. But this church did not long remain alone. Very soon other churches were formed after this model, and it became one of many similar churches, scattered "throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria." (Acts 9 : 31). Each one of these churches was complete within itself, and wholly independent of all others. This model church, however, never became *the church of Judea*, though it was surrounded by "the churches which were in Judea." The New Testament knows absolutely nothing of a *national, provincial, or territorial* church. We nowhere read of any great "*ecclesiastical establishment*," comprising within its limits many local churches; such as the Episcopal Church, the Lutheran Church, the Presbyterian Church, or the Methodist Church. All such establishments are of human origin, and were entirely unknown in the days of Christ and his apostles. It was not until near the close of the second century, that such *confederated* churches began to be established, first among the Greeks, and then among the Latins. (See *Mosheim's Eccl. Hist.* vol. i, p. 116.)

#### § A DIVINE MODEL OF CHURCH POLITY GIVEN.

In the previous discussion, it was merely *assumed* that our Lord gave his apostles a *permanent Model* of Church Polity in his first *ekklesia*, or church, after

which all his other churches should be fashioned to the end of time. We proceed now to prove this fact from the Scriptures. In a matter so important as the constitution, government, and discipline of his churches, we might reasonably expect that he would furnish such a model. Whatever is left to human discretion in religion, pertains to matters of minor importance; such, for instance, as the construction of meeting-houses, the hours for public worship on the Lord's day, the manner and order of divine service, etc. Specific legislation on such points would be a great inconvenience, and often impracticable. But it is quite otherwise in regard to the organization, government, and discipline of Gospel churches. These are matters of vital importance to the peace and prosperity of every church; and to leave them undetermined, would unavoidably produce discord and divisions among God's people. From the very nature of the case, therefore, we are entitled to expect a divine model of Church Polity, after which all churches should be fashioned. Now that such a model was given may be argued,

1. *From Scripture analogy.* When the Tabernacle was about to be made, "Moses was admonished to make all things according to *the pattern* shown him in the mount." (Exod. 25: 40; Heb. 8: 5.) And when the Temple was to be erected, "David gave to Solomon his son *the pattern*" of the sacred edifice and its furniture, saying: "The Lord made me understand *in writing by his hand upon me*, all the works of this pattern." (1 Chron. 28: 11-19.) Now, it

is admitted by all that the Tabernacle and Temple were typical of "better things" under the Christian dispensation, among which are Gospel churches; and, reasoning from analogy, we should expect a divine model or pattern, such as was given for the Tabernacle and Temple. And if such a model was given, we are bound to follow it in the constitution, government, and discipline of our churches: just as Moses and Solomon were required to make all things according to the patterns furnished them. That a divine model of Church Polity was given is evident,

2. *From New Testament examples.* We find this model in Christ's *first ekklesia, or church*, organized and taught by himself; and in the numerous churches fashioned after that model by his inspired apostles. Wherever the apostles made and baptized disciples, they formed them into separate and independent churches according to the pattern furnished by the Savior; "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them." (Matt. 28: 19.) Now, the Apostles acted in all things by Christ's authority, and hence every thing pertaining to the constitution, government, and discipline of the apostolic churches was of divine appointment. These *inspired examples*, therefore, were evidently recorded for our imitation and instruction, and have all the force of positive precepts. If the New Testament churches are not models to us, then a large part of Scripture is wholly useless. But Paul declares that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable," etc. (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.)

Now, we are often called upon to be followers of the apostles, even as they also followed Christ; and this injunction is without exception or limitation. And as they followed Christ in the formation of churches, and as we are required to follow them without reserve, we are bound to imitate their example in church organization and government. But God's method of revealing his will on all subjects forbids us to expect a direct and formal address to *after ages* on the obligation of apostolic practice. Yet we have what is equivalent. There are instances in which older and more perfectly organized churches are exhibited as models to others less perfect; while some are praised or blamed for their conformity or non-conformity to these divine models. Since, then, the apostolic churches were modeled after Christ's first church, and since these churches, in turn, are presented as models to others, it is morally certain that the Savior and his apostles intended that all churches in every age should be formed after the same pattern.

Accordingly, Paul said to the Gentile churches: "For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which, in Judea, are in Christ Jesus." (1 Thess. 2: 14.) "And so I ordain in all the churches." (1 Cor. 7: 17.) "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." (1 Cor. 14: 33.) Here, it is plainly intimated that the same order and polity existed in all the apostolic churches. If God had left fallible men to adopt their own forms of church government, and to frame laws and regulations for the churches of the

saints, instead of being the author of peace, he would have been the author of endless confusion and strife. But, says the apostle: "We have no such custom, neither the churches of God." (1 Cor. 11: 16.) Now, these divine models are equally adapted to every age and country. For more than eighteen centuries, just such churches have existed and flourished among different nations, with no laws and regulations but those furnished by Christ and his apostles.

That a Divine model of Church Polity was given is further evident,

3. *From Apostolic teaching.* Now, we are not authorized to expect a formal and systematic treatise on the subject of Church Polity. This would be altogether anomalous, and contrary to the analogy of Scripture on other subjects. In the whole range of revealed truth we find nothing like a formal and systematic treatise on any subject. Doctrine and precept are every-where intermingled, seemingly to prevent erring man from separating faith and practice; and hence we must examine the Bible in its connection in order to know the whole truth on any doctrine or duty. So it is in regard to the constitution, government, and discipline of Gospel churches. The divine model is to be learned from the examples furnished by Christ and his inspired apostles, and from the incidental teachings of the New Testament, and not from a direct and formal treatise.

Nor does the subject admit of any other method of teaching. After ages are addressed, as it were, in the person of the first Christians, and modern churches

are known only in the apostolic churches. What was said to them is said to us. Thus, our Lord promised his continued presence with all his churches and ministers in every age in the persons of his apostles and first church. "And, lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28: 20); "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 28: 20.) This promise is as true now as it was then, for it was made to churches and ministers of all ages. And thus, the apostles addressed us in the person of Christians then living, and represent them as equally concerned with us in the remotest future events; "We who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (or precede) them who are asleep." (1 Thess. 4: 15.) Here Paul addresses those who shall be living at the time of Christ's second coming, in the person of the church of the Thessalonians. Many similar examples might be given, but it is unnecessary.

Since, then, the churches of all after ages are addressed and represented in the person of apostolic churches, it follows that whatever *form* of church government and discipline Christ and his apostles adopted and recommended, is as binding on us as it was on them. The model given by the Savior, and imitated by his inspired apostles, was unquestionably designed for all other churches to the end of the world. Now, since the churches of all ages are addressed in the person of apostolic churches, how absurd to expect a direct and formal treatise on the subject of Church

Polity! Doubtless the apostles gave all necessary instructions at the time of constituting churches. How preposterous would it have been for an apostle, after having formed a church in a place, then to address a formal treatise to that church, giving specific directions as to the organization of churches, when they already had an inspired model before them! All that could reasonably be expected, would be incidental allusions to the fact, with timely hints and suggestions. And this is precisely what we find in the New Testament. Certainly no person who pleads the authority of apostolic practice for the observance of the first day of the week as the Lord's day, or for any other purpose, can consistently deny its obligation in this case. Inspired examples and incidental teachings, are all that we need on this and kindred subjects.

Hence it is plain from the analogy of Scripture, from New Testament examples, and from apostolic teaching, that we have a *Divine Model of Church Polity*, and that it is of perpetual obligation. But this model was not given in a formal and systematic treatise, but is exhibited in Christ's first church and in the numerous churches modeled after that pattern by the apostles, with general directions and incidental instructions. A *plan in model*, therefore, accompanied with timely hints and suggestions, is all that we are entitled to expect. The Scriptures teach both by example and precept, and the one is as authoritative as the other. Jesus began both to do and to teach; and he has left us an example, that we should follow in his steps in this as in every thing else.

Now, the fact that a particular *form* of Church Polity is not exhibited in *logical and systematic order* is no proof that none was given. As we have seen, the doctrines and precepts of Scripture are presented in the same way. No *system* of theology is formally arranged and logically presented in the Bible. We have "line upon line, and precept upon precept; here a little and there a little," on all subjects. It has been left to the diligent research of Christians to collect the scattered fragments of truth, and arrange them in systematic order. A *logical system* of Church Polity, therefore, would have been out of place in revelation. General principles and inspired examples, with incidental hints and instructions, are all that could be expected on this subject. Indeed, Church Polity could not have been treated *formally and systematically*; since it would have been inappropriate to write a regular treatise on the subject, after a church had already been organized. And as modern churches are nowhere known in the New Testament, save in the person of the first churches, a direct address on Church Polity was impossible. A divine model, copied by the inspired apostles, with incidental allusions, is all that the subject would permit.

## IDENTITY OF APOSTOLIC AND BAPTIST CHURCHES.

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### I. THEY ARE IDENTICAL IN CONSTITUTION.

As we have briefly shown, our Lord himself organized and taught his first church as the *pattern* after which all his other churches were to be modeled to the end of time. On his return from the scene of his temptation in the wilderness, John the Baptist stood with two of his disciples, and, looking upon Jesus as he walked, said: "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD!" And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed the Savior to his place of temporary abode. One of the two was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother; and he first finding his own brother Simon, said unto him: "We have found the Messiah," and he brought him to Jesus. That the other disciple was John, the brother of James, can scarcely admit of a doubt. And here and now, in some rude hut on the banks of the Jordan, was Christ's first and model church constituted of these three pious fishermen, A. D. 30; for, says Dr. Smith, "those three already formed THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH." (See New Test. Hist. p. 208.) On the following day, Philip and Nathaniel were added to

their number. (See John 1: 35-45.) Thus they were gathered together in Christ's name.

After a hasty visit to Galilee, our Lord and his chosen disciples attended the Passover at Jerusalem, and again retired to the vicinity of the Jordan, where he tarried and baptized. John was now baptizing in Enon near to Salem, and he seized this opportunity to bear explicit testimony to Christ and his infant church, saying: "*He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom; he must increase, but I must decrease.*" (John 3: 29, 30.) And as "Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John," his young bride or church grew and multiplied rapidly. (See John 4: 1-3.) Some of these disciples had already been called to become "fishers of men," and hence had been employed to baptize for Christ; but it was not until the following year that he formally set apart "*the twelve*" to the apostleship, "that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sickness and to cast out devils." (Mark 3: 13-21.)

These disciples now formed a complete church, under the Shepherd and Bishop of Souls; and during all the time that "the Lord Jesus went in and out among them," they were receiving instructions preparatory to the great work assigned them as apostles and as a church. They were an organized body of baptized believers, voluntarily associated together in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, and subject only to Christ as their Head and Lawgiver. Accordingly, DR. SMITH remarks: "In this assembly on the shores of the lake of Galilee, we see at length all the

elements of the visible Church of Christ separated from the world; and now he proceeds to provide the *teachers* who were to guide them, and the *doctrines* which they were to teach and the people to receive." (New Test. Hist. pp. 255, 256.)

Now, this first church, gathered and instructed by Christ himself, was unquestionably designed as the *model* of all other churches to the end of the world. The apostles so understood it, and hence they fashioned their churches after this divine pattern. As the inspired founders and instructors of the churches, they provided for their wants as occasion required. Accordingly, when deacons became necessary, they directed the model church to select suitable men to fill the office (Acts 6: 1-6); and when pastors were needed, they prescribed the requisite qualifications, and then set apart the persons chosen by the churches to instruct and watch for their souls as under shepherds. (See Acts 14: 23; Titus 1: 5-9; Heb. 13: 17; 1 Pet. 5: 1-4.) Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the apostles explained and enforced all things whatsoever Jesus had commanded them, and taught every church to exercise a watchful and wholesome discipline over its members. (Matt. 18: 15-21; 1 Cor. 5: 3-7; etc.)

That the apostolic churches were modeled after the church at Jerusalem, is admitted by the ablest Pedobaptist writers. For example, GIESLER, in his Church History, says: "The new churches everywhere formed themselves on the model of the mother church at Jerusalem." (See Cunningham's Trans. vol. i., p. 56.) And MOSHEIM adds: "Since all these

churches were constituted and formed after the model of that which was planted at Jerusalem, a review of the constitution and regulations of this one church alone will enable us to form a tolerably accurate conception of the form and discipline of all these Christian assemblies." (De Rebus Christ. Saco. 1, §87.)

Such, in brief, was the constitution of the apostolic churches, modeled after the pattern furnished by the Savior. And such is the constitution of all regular Baptist churches formed after the same divine pattern. Every Baptist church is an assembly of baptized believers, voluntarily associated together in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by his laws, and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges vested in them by his word. All the constituent elements of apostolic churches are found in Baptist churches, and they are identical in their constitution.

## II. THEY ARE IDENTICAL IN MEMBERSHIP.

The apostles acted under the broad commission of Christ, and wherever they made and baptized disciples, they immediately organized them into local congregations, after the model of the first church at Jerusalem. Hence we read of "the church" in a particular city, village, or private house, and of "the churches" of certain regions, but never of a church embracing a plurality of congregations confederated together as one grand church or hierarchy. (See Acts 8: 1; 13: 1-4; 15: 41; Rom. 16: 1, 5; 1 Cor. 1: 2; 11: 20; 14: 23; 16: 19.) These are the only

churches known to the New Testament. There is no trace of any other kind of church, diocesan, national, or presbyterian. Like the model church, they were composed exclusively of persons who had been baptized on a credible profession of their faith in Christ, and gave satisfactory evidence of being born again.

Now, that the apostolic churches were local assemblies of *baptized believers*, formed by mutual consent, and designed for religious purposes, is evident from the addresses of the epistles. *As it is written*: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, and called to be saints. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death," etc. (Rom. 1: 1, 7; 6: 4.) "Paul, unto the church of God at Corinth, sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints. Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. 1: 2, 13.) "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, unto the churches of Galatia. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." (Gal. 1: 2; 3: 26, 27.) "Paul, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. One Lord, one faith, one baptism." (Eph. 1: 1; 4: 5.) "Paul, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse. Buried with him in baptism," etc. (Col. 1: 1; 2: 12.) Thus all the apostolic churches were addressed, and the whole tenor of the epistles clearly proves that the members had been baptized on a credible profession of their faith, and were regarded as saints.

The same is equally true of Baptist churches. They are composed exclusively of such as profess faith in Christ and have been baptized. None can enter a Baptist church except those who give satisfactory evidence of repentance, and have been immersed on a credible profession of their faith. Nor are we alone in this view of the subject. Protestant Pedobaptists generally, infant baptism aside, admit the correctness of our practice. For instance, DR. SMITH, in his *Eccl. Catechism*, p. 80, says: "Only those who make a credible profession of their faith in Christ can be admitted as members of the church of Christ, because its privileges, by their very nature, are intended only for those who, in the judgment of charity, are disciples of Christ." And DR. NEANDER, a learned Lutheran, remarks: "Faith in Jesus of Nazareth, the Savior of the world, and union with him, a participation in that salvation which cometh through him—this is that inward principle, that unchangeable foundation, on which the Christian church essentially rests." (*Introd. to Coleman's Prim. Ch.* p. 14.)

Now, if these views be correct, it is evident that there is no place in a church of Christ for such as do not or can not profess their faith in Christ. Hence, infants are excluded by the very constitution of Gospel churches. Upon the same principle they are excluded from baptism, since the ordinance is the appointed method of professing faith in Christ. Such, then, were the apostolic churches, and such are Baptist churches; and they are identical in membership.

### III. THEY ARE IDENTICAL IN FAITH AND PRACTICE.

The apostolic churches, like the mother church at Jerusalem, "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2: 42.) They held to salvation by grace through faith without works, and were "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." (Eph. 2: 20.) Justification by faith without the deeds of law was a fundamental article of their creed, and none were received into fellowship except those who professed to hold this doctrine. With them there was "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," and they stood fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, and were not entangled with any yoke of bondage. They were constituted and maintained upon a purely voluntary principle, and acknowledged Christ as their only Head and Lawgiver.

They were not only sound in faith, but correct in practice. They were living epistles of Christ, known and read of all men. They were steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that their labor was not in vain in the Lord. All were practical missionaries, "holding forth the word of life," both at home and abroad. (See *Missile* No. V, on Missions.) They made even their deep poverty abound unto the riches of their liberality, and prayed the apostles with much entreaty to receive their benefactions. (2 Cor. 8: 1-9.) They did good unto all

men, but especially to the household of faith. The love of Christ constrained them, and they lived not unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again. Yet they were imperfect and liable to err, and hence needed timely cautions, exhortations, and warnings.

Now, the same may be truly said of all regular Baptist churches. They are identical with the apostolic churches, both in faith and practice. They hold the same doctrines and observe the same ordinances, as all admit. They acknowledge the same divine Head and Lawgiver, and stand fast in the same liberty. They possess the same spirit of missions, and labor and pray for the spread of the Gospel at home and abroad. If not equally liberal and pious, it is owing to the want of proper instruction and training, and not to any difference of faith and practice. In the Providence of God, Baptists have taken the lead in most, if not all, the great schemes of modern benevolence, which have for their object the glory of God in the amelioration and salvation of our lost race; and their example has provoked others to love and good works. (See *MISSILE* No. V. pp. 262-289.)

Accordingly, all Protestant denominations recognize the Baptists as evangelical Christians, and regard our churches as true churches of Christ, sound in the faith and practice of the Gospel. Hence it is that Baptists in good standing in their own churches can join any other church in Christendom without the slightest change of faith or practice, which is not true of members of any other denomination. None object

to what we do believe and practice, but concede that we are right and scriptural as far as we go; they merely complain of what we do not believe and practice, and insist that we should indorse the commandments of men. Thus all practically admit that the apostolic churches and Baptist churches are identical in faith and practice.

#### IV. THEY ARE IDENTICAL IN RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES.

As it was manifestly the design of our Lord that his churches should embrace only such as receive him as their Savior and submit to him as their Sovereign, so he has intrusted to them the high privilege of self-government, under himself. The New Testament, which contains the charter, constitution, and discipline of Christ's churches, defines and limits their rights and privileges. In committing the government of his churches to themselves, the Savior has evinced his confidence in their competency, fidelity, and love. And this confidence has seldom been betrayed when the churches were left to themselves. The enormous evils which have cursed Christianity were the legitimate fruits of clerical ambition and domination, as is attested both by sacred and secular history.

1. *The apostolic churches, like the model church, possessed the sole right of discipline, formative and corrective.*

This was as reasonable as it is scriptural. Their very nature, as voluntary societies, involved the right to receive or reject applications for baptism and mem-

bership; and hence the New Testament recognizes the right and enjoins the duty upon every church. (Rom. 14: 1.) The apostolic churches were voluntary compacts, having given themselves first to the Lord and then to one another by mutual consent. All who made a credible profession of faith in Christ were received at once for baptism and admitted to church-membership, and afterward taught the way of the Lord more perfectly. (See Mosh. Eccl. Hist., vol. i, p. 80.)

Accordingly, Dr. LYMAN COLEMAN remarks: "The Christian church derived its earliest *form* from a small society of believers, who were united together by no law but that of the love which they felt one to another, and to their common Lord. After his ascension they continued to meet in singleness of heart for the mutual interchange of sympathy and love, and for the worship of their Lord and Master. The government which in process of time the fraternity adopted for themselves, was *free* and *voluntary*. Each individual church possessed the rights and powers inherent in an independent popular assembly; and the entire government was vested in each church, and was exercised by the members of the same, in connection with their overseers and teachers." (Prim. Ch., p. 25. See Neander's Apost. Ch., vol. i, chap. 1.)

Now, the fundamental principles of corrective church discipline are laid down in Matt. 18: 15-20. Our Lord here prescribes the course to be pursued with an offending brother, and designates "*the church*" of which he is a member as the tribunal of ultimate ap-

peal. What, then, is "the church" here mentioned? Jesus answers the question: "*Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*" This is "the church" to which the Savior alludes, though it consist of but two or three members. It is gathered together in his name, governed by his laws, and blessed with his presence; and is, therefore, fully competent to decide all questions involving the character and conduct of its own members. The New Testament recognizes no higher tribunal on earth. Its decisions are final, and can be reversed only by itself. And it is worthy of remark that the officers of the church are not even mentioned here, because they are not necessary to the validity of its action.

Among the apostolic churches, the case of the Corinthian church is decisive. Here was a case of gross immorality, demanding prompt and severe discipline, and yet even Paul did not dare to interfere with the rights of that church. As an inspired founder and instructor of the church, the apostle first rebuked the members for the neglect of discipline, and then commanded them, "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," *when they were gathered together as a church*, "to deliver such a one unto Satan (*i. e.* excommunicate him) for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. "Purge out, therefore," says he, "the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump," etc. (1 Cor. 5: 1-7, 13.) The faithful exercise of discipline in this case resulted in good, both to the church and the offender; and, in

his second epistle, Paul earnestly besought the church to restore the penitent man to her fellowship. (2 Cor. 2: 6-11.) This view of the subject is confirmed by the instructions given to other churches. (See Rom. 16: 17; 2 Thess. 3: 6, 14, 15, etc.)

Accordingly, LYMAN COLEMAN observes: "The discipline of the apostolic churches was administered by each body of believers collectively; and continued to be under their control until the third or fourth century. About this period the simple and efficient discipline of the primitive church was exchanged for a complicated and oppressive system of penance, administered by the clergy. But the church itself possesses the only legitimate authority for the administration of discipline. Its members form a voluntary association. They have the right to enact their own laws, and to prescribe such conditions of membership with themselves as they may judge expedient and agreeable to the word of God. The right to administer ecclesiastical discipline was guaranteed to the churches from their first organization under the apostles; but was finally lost by the usurpation of the priesthood under the Episcopal Hierarchy." (Prim. Ch., p. 87).

2. *The apostolic churches possessed the right of electing their own officers.*

The evidence of Scripture on this point is clear and conclusive. We read of the election of an apostle, and of deacons, elders, and messengers by the churches. The first instance on record is the appointment of an apostle to fill the place of Judas Iscariot. (Acts 1: 15-26.) If the apostles had felt themselves author-

ized to act on their own responsibility in any case, certainly it would have been in this case, when a vacancy was to be filled in their own body. But they committed the choice, under God, to the hundred and twenty disciples, or first church: "And they gave forth their lots (or votes), and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles." Thus the principle of popular election to office was settled at the outset.

In Acts 6: 1-6, the election of the first deacons is recorded. We read that "the twelve" called together "the multitude of the disciples," and instructed them to select "seven men" of suitable qualifications for the deaconship. "The whole multitude," or church, united in the choice of Stephen and others, and set them before the apostles for prayer and the imposition of hands. Hence it is evident that, in the judgment of the apostles, the right to elect to office was vested in the church. And this view of the subject is confirmed by the fact, that the churches appointed messengers to travel with the apostles in conducting missions. (See Acts 15: 22-29; 2 Cor. 8: 19.) Accordingly, DR. NEANDER observes: "It is evident that the first deacons, and the delegates who were authorized to accompany the apostles, were chosen by the churches themselves. From these examples we may infer that a similar method was adopted in the appointment of elders." (*Planting and Training of the Apost. Ch.* p. 703.)

These instances are sufficient to show that the apostolic churches possessed the right to elect their own

officers. They are clear and explicit, and must, therefore, determine the meaning of all equivocal cases. These remarks are applicable to the appointment of "*elders*" mentioned in Acts 14: 23. "And when they (Paul and Barnabus) had ordained them elders in every church," etc. Now the doctrine of popular rights is clearly implied in the original word here translated *ordained*, which literally means *to choose or elect by holding up the hands*. (See Coleman's Apost. and Prim. Church, pp. 58-62.) In this sense the word is used in classic Greek; and was so rendered here by Beza, Erasmus, Grotius, Robinson, and many others. The obvious meaning of the passage is, that the churches elected their own elders or pastors, and the apostles formally inducted them into office.

In a succinct history like the Acts, it is not to be expected that details would be given in all cases. It is sufficient that we have clear and unmistakable instances of election to office by the churches; and, according to an established principle of biblical interpretation, obscure cases must be understood in harmony with these plain examples. Hence, when it is simply said that Paul and Barnabas "ordained them elders in every church," it is necessarily implied that they acted merely as a presbytery in setting apart to office those whom the several churches had chosen to be their pastors and teachers. Accordingly, says WM. TYNDAL: "We read only of the apostles constituting elders *by the suffrages of the people*. Acts 14: 23," etc. (Rights of the Church, p. 358.) This indeed is evident, not only from the Scriptures, but also from

the very nature of the pastoral relation, which can be properly formed only by mutual consent, like the marriage union.

The truth of this position is confirmed by standard historians and writers of all denominations. For example, DR. MOSHEIM, speaking of the apostolic churches, remarks: "In those primitive times, each Christian church was composed of the *people*, the *presiding officers*, and the *assistants or deacons*. These must be the component parts of every society. The principal voice was that of the *people*, or the whole body of Christians; for even the apostles, inculcated by their example, that nothing of any moment was to be done or determined on, but with the knowledge and consent of the brotherhood. Acts 1: 15; 6: 3; 15: 4; 21: 22. And this mode of proceeding, both prudence and necessity required in those early times. *The assembled people, therefore, elected their own rulers and teachers*, or by their free consent, received such as were nominated (or recommended) to them. They also, by their suffrages, rejected or confirmed the laws that were proposed by their rulers in their assemblies; they excluded profligate and lax brethren, and restored them; they decided the controversies and disputes that arose; they heard and determined the causes of presbyters and deacons; in a word, the people did every thing that was proper for those in whom the *supreme power* is vested." (Mosh. Eccl. Hist. by Murdock, vol. i, p. 68.)

And DR. MOSHEIM adds: "This power of appointing their elders continued to be exercised by the

members of the church at large, as long as primitive manners were retained entire; and those who ruled over the churches did not conceive themselves at liberty to introduce any deviation from the apostolic model." "NEANDER also asserts, that this mode of election by the whole body of the church, remained unimpaired in the third century." (See Coleman's *Apost. and Prim. Church*, pp. 60, 69.)

Accordingly, DR. BARROW observes: "In ancient times there was not any small church which had not a suffrage in the choice of a pastor." (See Reynold's *Church Polity*, p. 81.)

Now, it is scarcely necessary to state, that the apostolic churches and Baptist churches are identical in this particular. All intelligent persons must know that every Baptist church claims and exercises the exclusive right to elect its own officers, and that all the members enjoy equal privileges in the choice of a pastor and deacons; nor can any association, convention, or council deprive the smallest church of this inalienable right. Wherever even two or three Baptists are gathered together as a church in the name of Jesus, doing business according to his laws, and seeking his presence, its acts are scriptural and valid, and no power but its own can reverse its decisions. A Baptist church, like the apostolic churches, is the highest ecclesiastical authority on earth.

#### V. THEY ARE IDENTICAL IN GOVERNMENT.

The government of the apostolic churches was neither Episcopal nor Presbyterian, but *congregational*,

*or democratic.* We have already shown, both from the New Testament and ecclesiastical history, that every church was charged with the discipline of its members, the election of its officers, and the management of all its affairs. This being the case, the *independence* and *sovereignty* of each church follows as a necessary consequence. The simplicity and apparent weakness of this form of church government may not comport with the suggestions of human expediency. But if it be the system devised and prescribed by infinite wisdom and goodness, it must be the best. In the language of DR. J. L. REYNOLDS, we say: "Experience has proved it to be so. It agrees best with the free spirit of Christianity, and is best adapted to the development of Christian life in the individual. It combines greater advantages, and is embarrassed with fewer difficulties than any system which human ingenuity, pride, or the lust of power has ever devised." (Church Polity, p. 98.) It is mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, and is adapted to all ages and climes.

Now, that the government of the apostolic churches was congregational and independent, is evident both from the New Testament and church history. As we have seen, the very word chosen by our Savior to designate his churches signifies a local congregation of baptized believers, voluntarily associated together in his name for the execution of his laws and the maintenance of his worship. The whole matter of discipline, formative and corrective, was committed by Christ through his inspired apostles to each indi-

vidual church as such, and not to church officers. (See Matt. 18 : 15-20.) And the instructions given by the apostles relative to the administration of discipline in the first churches, clearly shows their independent character. For instance, Paul said to the church at Rome: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye," etc. (Rom. 14: 1.) "Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." (Rom. 16: 17.) These injunctions can be obeyed only by an independent and sovereign church; and they plainly indicate that such was the church at Rome.

The epistle to the Corinthians was addressed to "the church of God at Corinth," and Paul expressly declares that the right to judge of the character and conduct of its members, and the power to exclude or restore to membership in its body, was vested *in the church itself* "when gathered together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," and not in its officers. (See 1 Cor. 1: 2; 5: 1-13; 2 Cor. 2: 6-8.) Similar commands and instructions were given to other churches, all going to prove that they were sovereign and independent bodies, subject only to Christ and his laws, and intrusted with the right and responsibility of self-government.

The independence of the first churches is fully attested by historians and writers of the highest authority. For example, DR. MOSHEIM says: "All the churches in those primitive times were *independent bodies*; or none of them subject to the jurisdiction of any other.

For though the churches founded by the apostles themselves frequently had the honor shown them to be consulted in difficult and doubtful cases, yet they had no judicial authority, no control, no power of giving laws. On the contrary, it is clear as noon-day, that all Christian churches had *equal rights*, and were in all respects on a footing of equality. Nor does there appear in this first century, any vestige of that *consociation* of the churches of the same province, which gave rise to *ecclesiastical councils* and to *metropolitans*. But rather, as is manifest, it was not till the *second* century that the custom of holding ecclesiastical councils first began in Greece, and thence extended into other provinces. (Mosh. Eccl. Hist. by Murdock, vol. i, p. 72.) And speaking of the second century, DR. MOSHEIM, adds: "During a great part of this century, all the churches continued to be, as at first, *independent* of each other, or were connected by no consociations or confederations. Each church was a kind of small independent republic," etc. (Mosh. Eccl. Hist. vol. i, p. 116.)

DR. BURTON, a learned Episcopalian writer, states: "Every church had its own spiritual head or bishop, and was independent of every other church with respect to its own internal regulations." (Burton's Hist. Ch. p. 262, N. Y., 1839.)

DR. WILLIAM CARPENTER remarks: "It is too evident from the New Testament to admit of controversy, that each organized and disciplined assembly of believers constituted a church of Christ, *strictly independent of all other churches* as to its government and

internal economy; though united with all others in one common bond of faith and love, and in every respect ready to promote the interests and welfare of the whole by a reciprocal interchange of good offices. And in these primitive churches there was *perfect equality* among the members, no one having greater power or authority than another, but the whole constituting one body, in which the general authority was lodged." (Supplement to the Comprehensive Commentary, pp. 133, 134.)

And GIBBON, speaking of the churches of the first and second centuries, says: "The societies which were instituted in the cities of the Roman empire, were united only by the ties of faith and charity. *Independence and equality formed the basis of their internal constitution.* . . . Such was the mild and equal constitution by which Christians were governed more than a hundred years after the death of the apostles. *Every society formed within itself a separate and independent republic*; and, although the most distant of these little states maintained a mutual as well as friendly intercourse of letters and deputations, the Christian world was *not yet* connected by any supreme authority or legislative assembly." (Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. i, pp. 171, 172.)

Nor does the so-called "ecclesiastical council," recorded in Acts, 15th chapter, furnish any authority or precedent for a higher tribunal than a single independent Gospel church. In the language of DR. WILLIAM SMITH, of London, a standard Episcopalian writer, we say: "There is no ground for calling the

assembly at Jerusalem the *first general council*. It was no meeting of delegates from all the churches, for even those sent from Antioch went rather to *consult* a sister church, and especially the apostles, than to represent the views of their own church; and the *divine basis* on which the decision is placed takes it quite out of the category of synodical sentences, which decide grave differences of opinion by the mere voice of a majority. If in any sense the first council of the church, it was the *last* which had a right to say, "It seemed good to the *Holy Ghost* and to us." (New Test. Hist. pp. 455, 456.) The church at Jerusalem was involved in this question, for those judaizing teachers had gone out from that church, and misrepresented their views. It was necessary, therefore, that the question should be considered by "the apostles, and elders, and brethren" together, and finally settled both for Jews and Gentiles throughout the world. But the appeal was to *Inspiration*; and when the Holy Spirit gave his decision by the mouth of James, "then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas," to bear letters to the Gentile converts in Antioch, and Syria, and Celicia, making known that decision. (See verses 13-23.)

Now, there is a perfect identity in the government of apostolic churches and Baptist churches. Every Baptist church is entirely independent of all other churches, and forms within itself a separate and independent republic, subject only to Christ and his laws, while it is bound to sister churches by the ties of faith

and love, and cordially co-operates in every good word and work. Each church, as Christ's executive on earth, directs and governs its own affairs according to the Scriptures, and does every thing that is proper for those in whom the supreme power is vested. Associations, conventions, and councils may properly *advise* and *recommend* measures to the churches, but they have no legislative, or judicial, or compulsory power whatever over any church. With Baptists, as with the apostles, a church is the highest and only ecclesiastical authority in Christ's kingdom, and it can not delegate its power to any association, convention, council, or committee. To the churches, *as such*, and to them alone, belong the keys of the kingdom; they can open, and none can shut; they can bind, and none can loose; and whatever they do in accordance with the Scriptures is approved and ratified in heaven. Christ is their only Head, and the New Testament their only rule of faith and practice, and they stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free. Such were the apostolic churches, and such are Baptist churches.

#### VI. THEY ARE IDENTICAL IN PERMANENT OFFICERS.

The New Testament enumerates the various gifts which were bestowed upon the apostolic churches. It mentions apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, helps, governments, miracles, healing, tongues, etc. (See Rom. 12 : 6-8 ; 1 Cor. 12 : 4-10, 28 ; Eph. 4 : 7-11.) Some of these gifts were *extraor-*

*dinary*, designed to meet the exigencies of Christianity in its incipient stages, and hence have ceased in the churches. Others were *ordinary*, intended to supply the wants of the churches and the world in all ages; and, therefore, will continue to the end of time. That miraculous and prophetic gifts have ceased is unquestionable. So have others, because no longer necessary. But the ordinary gifts remain in the churches; such as *evangelists, pastors and teachers, exhorters, helps, governments*, etc. (See Rom. 12: 6-8; 1 Cor. 12: 28; Eph. 4: 11; 2 Tim. 4: 5; Acts 21: 8.) All these gifts belong to the churches, and are under their direction and control, but only two classes are properly and strictly *church officers*, viz.: BISHOPS OR ELDERS, AND DEACONS.

Now, the Episcopal assumption that the apostolic office was designed to be permanent, and that it has been perpetuated in a succession of diocesan and prelatial bishops, superior in rank to elders or presbyters, and possessing the government of all the churches, is both unreasonable and unscriptural. The qualifications requisite for apostles were such as none of their pretended successors could possibly possess. In the language of DR. WM. SMITH, a learned Episcopalian of London, we say: "The marks of the apostolic office were these: personal intercourse with Christ, appointment by himself, and the gift of the Holy Spirit;—to which was added the power to confer that gift on others. The union of these signs distinguished the apostles from every other class of ministers." (New Test. History, p. 261.) The apostles were the *chosen and in-*

*spired witnesses* of Christ. To qualify them for this peculiar office, our Lord selected "*the twelve*" as his personal attendants, communicated to them his plans and purposes, and made them the *special witnesses* of his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension—the great facts upon which Christianity rests; and then endued them with power from on high by the Holy Spirit for the peculiar work assigned them. (See Mark 3: 14 Luke 24: 45-49.) It was impossible, therefore, that any but the apostles should possess these qualifications.

After Christ's resurrection, it became the chief business of the apostles to *bear witness* of that great event. This was the distinctive peculiarity of the apostolic office, and it was not transferable to any person or persons. The resurrection of Christ was the crowning fact of his atoning work, and hence the apostles dwelt upon it with peculiar emphasis. (See Acts 2: 32; 5: 32; 10: 39-41; 1 Cor. 15: 1-23.) Accordingly, Matthias was expressly chosen to be *a witness* with "the eleven" of Christ's resurrection. (Acts 1: 22-26.) And Paul was miraculously called and qualified to *testify* of Christ, and to *bear witness of his resurrection* unto all men. (Acts 22: 14, 15.) Hence this high office, from its very nature, was temporary, and was necessarily confined to those who had been with Jesus during his personal ministry, together with Matthias, who was appointed to fill the place of Judas—and Paul, who was specially called to be the apostle of the Gentiles, and permitted to *see* the Savior in a miraculous manner, *in order to* qualify him for the apostolic office. (See Acts 9: 5-7; 1 Cor. 9: 1, 2; Gal. 1: 1-17.) This

office, therefore, was one in which, from the very nature of the case, there *could* be no succession without a perpetual miracle. Hence it is evident that the apostolic office ceased with the apostles themselves, and the doctrine of "apostolic succession" is an arrogant and baseless assumption.

The Presbyterians and others attempt to make a distinction between *ruling elders and teaching elders*. In support of this distinction, they rely chiefly upon 1 Cor. 12: 28 and 1 Tim. 5: 17. The former passage is too indefinite in its phraseology to establish the distinction, and would probably never have been supposed to favor it, had not the latter passage seemed to teach it. The passage in Timothy reads as follows: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." The attempt to establish the distinction by this passage is beset with insurmountable difficulties. 1st. The term *elder* is every-where employed in the New Testament to designate ministers of the Gospel. 2nd. The Scriptures uniformly connect ruling and teaching together in the same persons as the appropriate work of pastors. As it is written: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them who *labor among you*, and are *over you* in the Lord, and *admonish you*;" etc. (1 Thess. 5: 12, 13; Comp. Heb. 13: 7, 17, 24.) And, 3d. The total absence of any directions respecting the qualifications and duties of ruling elders, proves that no such officers were contemplated in the churches. It is unaccountable that while other officers are mentioned, and their qualifications and

duties specified, nothing should be said respecting ruling elders as such.

Accordingly, DR. MOSHEIM remarks: "This distinction between *teaching and ruling* elders, if it ever existed, was certainly not of long continuance; for Paul makes it a requisite qualification of *all* bishops or presbyters, that they be *able to teach and instruct* others. 1 Tim. 3: 2, etc." (Mosh. Eccl. Hist. vol. i. p. 69.)

What, then, it may be asked, is the distinction referred to in this passage? The answer is plain. In many of the apostolic churches there was a plurality of elders or pastors, as well as of deacons. (See Acts 14: 23; 20: 17; Phil. 1: 1; Titus 1: 5; etc.) Whether one acted as "the angel," or pastor, and the others as his assistants in teaching and watching over the flock, or whether they all acted as co-pastors, we are not informed; but the fact of a plurality is beyond all question. Now, the Scriptures nowhere fix the number of elders and deacons, but leave each church to determine this as its needs may require. During the apostolic age, at least, there was often a necessity for a plurality of bishops or elders. Only a few of the churches had meeting-houses at that time, but worshiped in private dwellings; and where the membership was large, they were obliged to worship in separate places. Hence a plurality of elders or pastors was necessary to instruct and watch over them. All these elders were entitled to respect and remuneration according to their works, especially they who devoted themselves wholly to preaching and pastoral

visitation. Besides, there was in some churches a plurality of ordained ministers—as at Antioch and Jerusalem (Acts 13: 1; 15: 27), some of whom labored as elders or pastors of the churches, and others labored as evangelists among the destitute and the heathen around.

Hence we see that diocesan and prelatical bishops and ruling elders, *as such*, were unknown in the apostolic churches. The only permanent church officers mentioned in the New Testament are: BISHOPS OR ELDERS, AND DEACONS; and even these are not indispensable to the existence of churches. The model church at Jerusalem existed sometime before it was provided with deacons; and many other churches existed for months, at least, without elders or pastors. Paul and Barnabas, on their first missionary journey, planted churches in several provinces of Asia Minor; and, on their return, they acted as a presbytery in “ordaining them elders in every church.” It is evident, therefore, that offices are not essential to the being of a church, though they are necessary to its well-being. Hence we remark,

1. *That the apostolic churches were furnished with bishops or elders, also called ministers, overseers, pastors, and teachers.*

The terms *bishop* and *elder* are only different appellations for the same officer, and hence are employed interchangeably by the sacred writers. The term *elder* is of Jewish origin, and denotes the gravity and wisdom becoming the office; while the term *bishop* is of Grecian origin, and designates the object and work of

the office. Accordingly, DR. ROBINSON, in defining the word *bishop*, says: "This name was originally the Greek term equivalent to *elder*, which latter was derived from the Jewish polity." (Lexicon of N. Test. p. 315.) That this statement is correct is manifest from the Scriptures. For instance, take Acts 20: 17, 28, where Paul thus addresses the "*elders*" of the Ephesian Church: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers* (or *bishops*), to feed the church of God (rather, of *the Lord*), which he has purchased with his own blood." Here the terms are applied to the same officers by an inspired apostle. And this unequivocal passage serves to explain the term "*elders*" in Acts 14: 23, where we are told that Paul and Barnabas "ordained them elders in every church;" that is, they acted as a presbytery in ordaining or setting apart to office those whom the several churches had chosen to be their pastors.

Another passage equally clear is found in Titus 1: 5, where Paul says: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." Then, in enumerating the qualifications requisite for the office, as if to show that a bishop and elder are identical, the apostle adds: "For a *bishop* must be blameless as the steward of God." (See verse 7.) This view is confirmed by 1 Pet. 5: 1-4, where the apostle remarks: "The *elders* who are among you I exhort, who also am an elder. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the *oversight*

thereof;" that is, as a bishop or pastor. Now, the identity of these terms is so evident that it has been admitted by the highest Episcopalian authority. For example, BISHOP ONDERDONK observes: "The name bishop which now designates the highest grade of the ministry, is not appropriated to that office in Scripture. That name is given to the middle order, or presbyters." (Episcopacy tested by Scripture, p. 12.) Every elder, therefore, is a bishop; and "were it not," says MILTON, "that the tyranny of prelates under the name of bishop has made our ears tender and startling, we might call every good minister a bishop," etc. (See Reformation in England, wks. p. 19.)

This position is sustained by various other considerations. For instance, the New Testament mentions no intermediate class of officers between bishops and deacons. Paul, in his instructions to Timothy, first gives the qualifications of a bishop, and then those of deacons. (See 1 Tim. 3: 1-13.) And the apostle prescribes the same qualifications for bishops and elders. (See 1 Tim. 3: 1-7; Titus 1: 5-10.) Accordingly, JEROME says: "In both epistles, whether bishops or presbyters are to be elected (for with the ancients bishops and elders were the same, the one being descriptive of rank, the other of age), they are required each to be the husband of one wife." (See Coleman's Prim. Ch. p. 132.) Hence the duties and rights of both are the same. The apostles, in specifying the rights and duties of bishops and elders, employ the same language, which proves that they are one and the same class of officers.

(See 1 Thess. 5: 12; 1 Tim. 4: 14; 5: 17; 2 Tim. 1: 6; Heb. 13: 7, 17.)

There is scarcely a subject on which the testimony of antiquity is more explicit and unanimous than that of the original equality and identity of bishops and elders. The best church historians and theological writers concur in this view. For example, DR. NEANDER remarks: "I can discover no other difference between the *elders* and *bishops* in the apostolic age, than that the first signifies the rank, the second the duties of the office, whether the reference is to one or more." (Apostolic Church, Bk. 3, Chap. 5, p. 92.) And DR. MOSHEIM says: "The rulers of the church were denominated sometimes *presbyters* or *elders*—a designation borrowed from the Jews, and indicative rather of the wisdom than the age of the persons; and sometimes *bishops* also; for it is most manifest, that *both terms* are promiscuously used in the New Testament of one and the same class of persons, Acts 20: 17, 28; Phil. 1: 1; 1 Tim. 3: 1; Titus 1: 5, 7." (Mosh. Eccl. Hist. vol. i, p. 69.)

To this conclusion the reformers of the 16th century were brought with great unanimity, by reading the Word of God. Even in England, Wickliffe and many others contended for the original equality and identity of bishops and elders. For example, DR. JOHN REYNOLDS, an Episcopal divine, who "was universally reckoned the wonder of his age," boldly asserted in 1588, "that they who, for these five hundred years, have been industrious in reforming the church, have thought that all pastors, whether called bishops or

presbyters, have, according to the Word of God, like power and authority." (See Purchard's Hist. of Congregationalism, p. 197.) And this view perfectly accords with the *spirit* which our Lord enjoined upon his first ministers:—" *One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.*" (Matt. 23 : 8.)

Having shown the equality and identity of New Testament bishops and elders, let us briefly notice here their **SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY OR RULE**. That the pastoral office is vested with *real authority* of some kind, is clearly taught in the Word of God. Pastors are said to be *over* the churches in the Lord, to have the *rule* over them, to take *care* of them, etc., and churches are required to *esteem, honor, obey, and submit* to them, under Christ. (See 1 Cor. 16 : 15, 16 ; 1 Thess. 5 : 12, 13 ; 1 Tim. 5 : 17 ; Heb. 13 : 7, 17, 24 ; etc.) Not only these express injunctions, but the very *appellations* given to pastors imply official authority and rule. For instance, they are called "*ambassadors for Christ,*" appointed to beseech men in his stead to be reconciled to God, and to make known the terms of reconciliation. (2 Cor. 5 : 18-20.) They are also called *bishops or overseers*, implying official control and superintendence. (Acts 20 : 28 ; 1 Tim. 3 : 4, 5.) They are denominated *elders or presbyters*, indicative not only of becoming gravity and wisdom, but of presidential authority and rule. (Acts 20 : 17, 28.) And they are styled *shepherds of the flock*, under the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, to guide, protect, and watch over them. (John 10 : 2-4 ; 1 Pet. 5 : 1-4.) These titles imply real authority of some kind.

Now, as to the NATURE of pastoral authority, or rule, we observe, that it is neither legislative, judicial, executive, nor coercive. 1. It is not *legislative*; for Christ is the only Lawgiver in Zion, and his word is the only rule of faith and practice for his churches and ministers. No bishop nor "college of bishops," no council nor convention, no general assembly, general conference, nor any other ecclesiastical court, has any divine right to legislate for Christ's churches. While it is the duty of pastors to explain and urge obedience to the laws of Christ, it is equally the duty of churches to apply and enforce these laws.

2. Pastoral authority is not *judicial*. The churches of Christ are the only *judiciaries* in his kingdom. In all cases of discipline, the final decision rests with the particular church of which the offender is a member; and not with a bishop or church-council, not with the preacher in charge and a select committee, nor with a church session or presbytery. (See Matt. 18: 15-20; 1 Cor. 5: 3-5; 2 Cor. 2: 6-8.) As an *ambassador* for Christ, the pastor explains and enforces the law of discipline; as *bishop* or *overseer*, he directs and controls the action of the church according to the Scriptures; and as *president*, he presides over the body and pronounces its decisions. But the right of final judgment belongs exclusively to the church as such, and its decisions are final and irrevocable.

3. Pastoral authority is not *executive*. The churches are the *sole executives* in Christ's kingdom on earth, and to them, *as churches*, and to them alone, are the laws and ordinances of the kingdom committed for

execution and administration. While a pastor receives his authority to preach directly from Christ, his authority to baptize is received from his church, "with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery," as in the case of Paul. (See Acts 9: 15; 13: 1-3; Gal. 1: 17.) All executive power, therefore, is vested in the churches, *as such*, and not in the ministry.

4. Nor is pastoral authority *coercive*. Pastors are not "lords over God's heritage," but honored and voluntary servants of the churches for Jesus' sake. Their authority is purely spiritual, and they rule per force of personal piety and divine truth, clothed with the dignity of their high office. Where these fail to command obedience and respect, pastoral authority and rule are at an end. Like Jesus, they may weep over the obduracy and waywardness of brethren, but they can not compel obedience.

What, then, *is* the nature of pastoral authority? We answer, 1. That it is *declaratory and persuasive*. Pastors are divinely called to declare the whole counsel of God. They are solemnly bound to cry aloud and spare not, whether men will hear or forbear. Their first and great business is to "*preach the word* ; to be instant in season and out of season ; to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." As ambassadors for Christ, they make known the ground and terms of reconciliation, and pray men in his stead to be reconciled to God. And so far as they preach the truth, both Christians and sinners are as much bound to believe and obey it, as if spoken by Christ himself, and God will hold all to a strict account for

the manner in which they treat his preached word. The proclamation of the Gospel, therefore, is clothed with divine authority. It is God speaking to men by men, and hence it is a savor of life unto life or of death unto death to all who hear.

2. Pastoral authority is *exemplary*. There is great power in example, and its influence is in proportion to the dignity of position. Hence, pastors are required to be examples to believers, and to exemplify the truth which they preach. (1 Tim. 4: 12.) There is a moral fitness in this requirement. It is action that produces action; and unless pastors practice what they preach, they will rather hinder than promote the salvation of men. Every true shepherd ought to go before his flock, and set them an example that they may safely follow. (John 10: 4.) Thus the chief Shepherd "began both to do and teach." (Acts 1: 1.); and thus Paul taught from house to house, and exhorts all to follow him even as he also followed Christ. Pastoral example, therefore, has wonderful power, and necessarily exerts a controlling influence.

3. Pastoral authority is *official*. To speak of office without authority is a solecism. The pastoral office is of divine appointment, and was established "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Eph. 4: 8-16.) And as it is a divine office instituted for purposes so important, it merits the highest respect, aside from the personal claims of those who fill it. But faithful pastors are worthy of double honor, and should be esteemed very highly in love for their work's sake. (1 Thess. 5: 13.) They are not merely breth-

ren, but *church officers* of the highest rank, and as such, deserve the obedience and respect of their churches.

4. Pastoral authority is *presidential*. As overseers and shepherds, pastors are placed over the churches to instruct, guide, and protect them. Hence Peter exhorts elders or pastors, saying: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." (1 Pet. 5: 1-4.) And Paul exhorts Christians, saying: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you." (Heb. 13: 17.) By virtue of his office, the pastor presides over the people of his charge, and hence possesses presidential authority.

Such, then, is the *nature* of pastoral authority: it is declaratory, exemplary, official, and presidential. This is the only authority which Christ has given to pastors, and it is all that is safe in the hands of imperfect men. All history proves that more than this is corrupting to pastors, and dangerous to churches. A pious, prudent, and working pastor will have the confidence and esteem of all, and will exert a controlling influence over his people.

2. *The apostolic churches were also furnished with deacons, called ministers or servants.*

For a season the apostles seem to have managed both the spiritual and temporal affairs of the church at

Jerusalem. But when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples to them, and said : " It is not proper that we should leave the Word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen and six others, whom they set before the apostles for ordination." (Acts 6 : 1-6.) Thus a permanent division of labor was made, and thenceforth the temporal affairs of the church were committed to a class of officers called *deacons*, whose special business it was to "*serve tables*," or manage the temporalities of the church, while the *elders* or *pastors* had charge of her spiritual interests—giving themselves wholly to prayer, preaching, and pastoral visitation.

The nature of the deaconship is thus explained by the history of its origin. It grew out of the necessities of the first church, and was evidently designed to be permanent. The first deacons were not appointed to preach the Gospel, though some of them, as Philip, afterward became preachers; nor were they authorized to baptize, or to rule in the church, but simply and solely to manage its temporal affairs and provide for the wants of the poor and needy, that the apostles might give themselves continually to prayer and the

ministry of the word. Every church necessarily has two departments, a *spiritual* and a *temporal*; and as the pastor has charge of its spiritual interests, so the deacons have charge of its temporal interests. Its house of worship must be kept in order, its pastor must be supported, and its poor assisted; in short, the Gospel must be preached, and the worship of God sustained at home and abroad. Now, all this requires means and money, and deacons are the divinely appointed officers of the churches to attend to these matters.

Hence we see that the deaconship is the very opposite of the ministry, though in perfect harmony with it, and is designed to relieve pastors of all temporal care and responsibility, that they may "feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof." 1 Pet. 5: 2.) And as long as there are churches on earth, this important class of officers will be necessary. No church can prosper long without deacons, as well as a pastor. Accordingly, we find them in all the apostolic churches. "The example of the church at Jerusalem" says Mosheim, "was followed by all the other churches, in obedience to the injunctions of the apostles; and, of course, they appointed deacons. 1 Tim. 3: 8-13; Phil. 1: 1." (Mosh. Eccl. Hist. vol. i, p. 70.) As to what is called *deaconesses*, it is very doubtful whether such a class of officers ever existed in the apostolic churches. Certain it is that they sustained no official relation to the churches, and were never intended to be permanent. Among the ancient heathen, females generally could be reached only by

females, and pious women were, doubtless, employed to instruct and minister to them—just as our missionaries now employ females in heathen lands.

In this important particular, there is perfect identity between the apostolic churches and Baptist churches. While evangelists, exhorters, etc., belong to our churches, and are necessary and useful, still they are not *church officers*, like pastors and deacons. The only church officers known to the New Testament and recognized by Baptist churches, are *Bishops or Elders, and Deacons*, whose qualifications, duties, and prerogatives are clearly defined in the Acts and Epistles. All other church officers are of human origin, and have no necessary connection with Christ's churches.

## VII. FACTS DEDUCED FROM THE SUBJECT.

Hence we learn,

1. *That the Apostolic churches and Baptist churches are identical in every essential particular.*

We have seen that they are identical in constitution, in membership, in faith and practice, in rights and privileges, in government, and in permanent officers. Hence Baptist churches are *fac-similes* of the apostolic churches; and the promise of Jesus, *that the gates of hell should not prevail against his successive churches*, has unquestionably been verified. We are warranted, therefore, in believing that in every age *just such churches*, under various names, have existed somewhere, and that they were Baptist churches in principle, practice, and polity, even though we might

not be able at present to trace the chain of succession with unerring certainty, and to show that no single link was wanting.

But we are under no necessity of tracing the succession, in order to make good our claim. We have shown that modern Baptist churches are in every essential particular identical with the apostolical churches; and, in view of this identity, we are fully justified in claiming such a succession, whether we can trace it or not. In the language of REV. J. WHEATON SMITH to Albert Barnes, we say: "Whatever is *found* in the New Testament is as worthy as if you traced it there. It is only a *doubtful* practice whose thread must be traced thus carefully through the labyrinths of history, with painful uncertainty lest you reach its end, while yet a century or two from Christ. If between us and the apostolic age there yawned a fathomless abyss, into whose silent darkness intervening history had fallen, with a Baptist church on this side, and a New Testament on the other, we should boldly bridge the gulf, and look for the record of our faith among the hills of Galilee." (*Dr. J. Wheaton Smith—Letter to Albert Barnes.*)

2. *That none but Baptist churches can justly claim such identity with the apostolic churches.*

In defining and explaining the word *church*, we showed that the pious of all ages and dispensations belong to the spiritual body of Christ, figuratively called "*the church.*" This body embraces all the saved, living and dead, in heaven and on earth; and it has no visible organization or positive ordinances,

and its members never will meet together on earth until the final judgment. It is a purely spiritual body, and hence invisible to us, containing none but the regenerate. All true believers of every name and order belong to this general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven, and for whom Christ gave himself especially. (Heb. 12: 23; Eph. 5: 25.)

But a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by his laws; and exercising all the gifts, rights, and privileges vested in them by his word; whose only scriptural officers are bishops or pastors, and deacons, chosen by itself, and subject to its discipline. Such unquestionably were the apostolic churches, and such are all regular Baptist churches. But no other churches can justly claim such identity. All others differ essentially either in constitution, membership, faith and practice, rights and privileges, government, or officers; and most of them differ in all these particulars. They may be religious societies, popularly called churches, but it is impossible that they should be Gospel churches. Indeed, many of them deny that the New Testament furnishes any model of churches, and hence do not claim identity with the apostolic churches. They maintain that Christ and his apostles left the whole matter of church polity to be regulated by men according to circumstances. (See Mosh. Eccl. Hist. vol. i, p. 67.)

3. *The great reason why all Baptists should practice church communion and reject alien immersion,*

All denominations admit that the Lord's Supper is a *church ordinance*, involving *church fellowship* as existing among the communicants ; and hence communion at the Lord's Table is a *church act*. For Baptists, therefore, to intercommune with others would be a formal and public recognition of them as qualified communicants, and their churches as Gospel churches, which we could not do without indorsing error and unchurching ourselves. We can, and do hold Christian communion in all scriptural ways with those of other denominations whom we regard as Christians, but we do not, and never can, regard Campbellites and Pedobaptists as qualified communicants, or their churches as Gospel churches, which we would do by intercommunion. Before we can consistently and scripturally hold church communion with them, they must abandon their errors, leave their human organizations, submit to baptism at the hands of our ministers, and unite with our churches. Then, and not till then, can we intercommune with them at the Lord's Table.

And this indeed is the principal reason why all Baptists should reject *alien immersion*. Though other ministers may be converted and called of God to preach, still they are unbaptized and unauthorized by Gospel churches to administer Christ's ordinances, and hence their official acts are invalid. They have no authority from Jesus Christ, or from a church of Christ, to baptize any one ; and, consequently, their unauthorized immersions are neither scriptural nor valid, even though the deluded subjects may be satisfied.

And for Baptist churches to receive such *pseudo* immersions, would be a public indorsement of Campbellite and Pedobaptist ministers as authorized administrators of baptism, and of their churches as Gospel churches, which we can never do without the grossest inconsistency, not to say disloyalty to Christ.

4. *That Baptist churches, like the apostolic churches, are divinely adapted to universal extension.*

The Author of civil government is unquestionably the author of Baptist church government, and he has wisely adapted the one to the other. The very independence of Baptist churches renders the union of church and state impossible, and places it out of their power to persecute and oppress others. Long experience has demonstrated the fact, that Baptist church government is equally adapted to all forms of civil government, and is practicable in all ages, circumstances, and countries. Hence there never has been, nor can there be, any antagonism between Baptist churches and civil government, be its form what it may. The munster mob in Germany forms no exception to this remark. It is a base slander to charge that riot upon Baptists as such, though some fanatical and ignorant Baptists were engaged in it. And this accounts for the fact, that Baptists have never persecuted or shed the blood of any one for conscience' sake, though their own history is written in blood shed by others. Always and every-where the motto of Baptists has been, "On earth peace, good-will toward men." The universal extension of Baptist churches, therefore, is both practicable and safe, and

would (as it will) usher in the fullness of millennial glory, when "a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment" (Isa. 32: 1); and when "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." (Dan. 7: 27.)

But no other form of church government is adapted to universal extension. All other forms are of human origin, and tend to centralization and subordination, and hence endanger both civil and religious liberty. And this accounts for the fact, that wherever hierarchical churches have gained the ascendancy, they have either combined with or resisted civil government, and persecuted other sects. History bears abundant testimony to this melancholy truth. And experience has demonstrated the fact, that even religious men are too imperfect to be intrusted with hierarchal power.

Hence our Lord has wisely guarded his churches against this great evil, by establishing an independent form of government, which harmonizes with all forms of civil government, and places it out of their power to persecute others. Accordingly, the apostles established such churches among all nations, and taught them to be "subject unto the higher powers," because civil government was ordained of God for the good of society. (Rom. 13: 1-7.) And while these independent little churches were opposed and persecuted both by Jews and Pagans, still they either obeyed the civil authorities, or suffered patiently for right-

eousness' sake. The same is true of Baptist churches—their only legitimate successors. In every age and country the Baptists have been the advocates of civil and religious liberty, while they have submitted themselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether to the king, as supreme; or to governors, as unto them who are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well." (1. Pet. 2: 13, 14.)

5. *That Baptist church government has more advantages, and is less liable to abuse, than any other form.* As we have shown, it is equally adapted to all forms of civil government, and is practicable and safe in all ages, circumstances, and countries, which is not true of any other form of church government. It is sufficient *in and of itself* for all church purposes, and needs no human expedients to give it efficiency and success; hence, Baptist churches, like the apostolic churches, have never asked, nor will they receive, government patronage and support, while they have existed and flourished in all ages and countries, and under all forms of civil government. They are the divinely constituted executives and judiciaries of Christ's kingdom on earth, and hence they "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

Again, Baptist church government is most favorable to personal improvement and soul liberty. It fully recognizes the individuality and manhood of every member, while it secures liberty of conscience to all, and refers them directly to the Bible to learn

their duties, rights, and privileges. In all Baptist churches the Word of God is the only authoritative rule of faith and practice, and every member is bound to interpret the Scriptures for himself and act accordingly. No other form of church government thus recognizes the individuality and manhood of its members, and in no other churches is this liberty so fully enjoyed. True, in some hierarchal churches individuals enjoy more liberty than in others, but the same general principle characterizes them all, viz.: The ruling power is vested in the *officers*, and the local churches are subject to higher judicatories; as consistories, church councils, sessions, and presbyteries, conferences, etc.

As a matter of fact, Baptist church government gave birth both to civil and religious liberty in this country. It furnished the *model* of the best civil government that ever existed. It is a well-established fact that THOMAS JEFFERSON derived his ideas of republican government from a little Baptist church in the neighborhood where he lived, whose business meetings he was accustomed to attend. The *fundamental principle* which underlies the whole structure of our government, and of each State, viz., *that all power is inherent in the people*, that the civil officers are chosen by the people, not to coerce, but to serve them, and to promote their interests and welfare, is the very center and soul of Baptist church government. But in all the history of Hierarchies, where have they ever given birth to civil liberty in any age or country? On the contrary, wherever a Hierarchy

has had the power, there civil government has been most despotic; and in proportion as the Hierarchy has been limited and modified, in that proportion civil government is free and tolerant.

Baptist church government also gave birth to *religious liberty* in this country. ROGER WILLIAMS, a Baptist minister, was the first man in all the history of human governments to assert and establish the entire separation of church and State, and to proclaim the absolute freedom of religion from all State control. Speaking of Williams, BANCROFT says: "He was a Puritan, and a fugitive from English persecution, . . . and he, and he alone, had arrived at the great principle which is its sole effectual remedy. He announced his discovery under the simple proposition of the sanctity of conscience. The civil magistrate should restrain crime, but never control opinion; should punish guilt, but never violate the freedom of the soul. . . And it became his glory to found a State upon that principle. . . He was the first person in modern christendom to assert in its plenitude the doctrine of the liberty of conscience, the equality of opinion before the law," etc. (See History of the United States, vol. 1, pp. 368-394.)

From this humble beginning in the State of Rhode Island, religious liberty has gradually extended over our entire country, being incorporated into the constitution of every State. In Virginia the struggle was long and hard, and the Baptists lead the van. Accordingly, DR. HAWKS, in his history of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Virginia, says: "The

Baptists were the principal promoters of this work, and, in truth, aided more than any other denomination in its accomplishment." And true to their principles, the Baptists, dissatisfied with the Constitution of the Federal Union on this vital point, strenuously urged, and finally procured, the amendment relating to religious liberty, which is now the supreme law of the land. And here we ask again, where in all the history of Hierarchies have they given birth either to civil or religious liberty? Not an instance can be found on the pages of history; indeed, they have ever been the deadly foes of freedom, both civil and religious.

But Baptist church government not only possesses superior advantages to all other forms, but it is far less liable to abuse than any other. Our church difficulties are necessarily local, affecting only particular churches, and never can become denominational. Each church is sovereign and independent, subject only to Christ as its Head and Lawgiver, and possesses the sole right to admit or exclude members. A church, therefore, is the highest ecclesiastical authority known or recognized among Baptists; it holds the keys of the kingdom; it can open, and none can shut. Our associations, conventions, and councils, are merely *advisory* bodies, dependent on the churches for their very existence. We have no appellate courts to which members and ministers may appeal. The decision of a church is final, and can be reversed only by itself. (Matt. 18: 15-20.)

Hence, if one Baptist church became heretical in doctrine, or irregular in practice, other churches may

withdraw their fellowship and refuse co-operation with it; but here the matter ends. It may even dissolve its organization and cease to exist, and no other church be at all injured by it, much less the whole denomination.

But it is quite otherwise with a hierarchal church. When a particular church becomes heretical or disorderly, the entire body necessarily suffers, and one individual, as in the case of Bishop Andrews, may divide a whole denomination by appealing from lower to higher courts. This arises from the fact that in a Hierarchy a church is the lowest court, subject to bishops, conferences, councils, assemblies, etc. Thus, men have reversed the order established by Christ, and degraded the churches below their servants. Strange that Christians will not stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free, but bow in subjection to ghostly usurpers.

6. *That Baptist churches, like the apostolic churches, need a high degree of Bible intelligence and personal piety among the membership.* This is necessary to self-government and church efficiency. All the members of a Baptist church enjoy equal rights and privileges, and all sustain mutual responsibilities; hence, the exhortation of Paul to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ, for every one shall bear his own burden; and hence the exhortation of Peter to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every Baptist, therefore, should give all diligence to add to his faith knowledge, and make the highest possible attainments in personal

piety. The peace and prosperity of our churches demand this, and our own happiness and usefulness require it. Our Lord has given us a perfect standard, and we should strive to come up to it. The want of Bible intelligence and personal piety among us is the most fruitful source of church difficulties, and all should labor to remedy the evil. Like Paul, we should forget the things that are behind, and reach forward to those which are before, ever pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

7. *That our rising ministry need the most thorough instruction and training.* The growing wants of our churches require pastors who can feed them with wisdom and knowledge, taking the oversight thereof. But in order to instruct and train the churches, pastors must first be instructed and trained themselves; and where young men are unable to acquire such instruction and training, the churches ought to help and sustain them. Our principles and polity are unquestionably divine, but the truth will suffer in our hands if our rising ministry be neglected. We need able ministers of the new covenant, and good ministers of Jesus Christ, who shall be mighty in the Scriptures.

# MISSILES OF TRUTH.

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## MISSILE NO. V.

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### BIBLE CLAIMS OF MISSIONS.

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Substance of a sermon preached in Union City, Nov. 10th, 1872, at the "WEST TENNESSEE BAPTIST CONVENTION," and published by the unanimous request of that body.

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LUKE 24: 45-47. *"Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them: Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."*

The missionary enterprise originated in the eternal purpose of God, prompted by infinite love. (John 3: 16; Eph. 1: 3-12.) That purpose was vaguely disclosed to our first parents in Eden soon after the fall. (Gen. 3: 15); more fully developed to Abraham in the promise, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed (Gen. 12: 3; 22: 18); and "that seed was Christ." (Gal. 3: 16.)

This benevolent purpose was still more clearly revealed by the prophets in successive promises. (Ps. 2: 8; Isa. 2: 2; 35: 1; 60: 3, 5; 66: 8; Dan. 7: 27; Dan. 12: 4; Hab. 2: 14.) Thus promise after promise, more fully developing the origin and progress of missions, was given from time to time, and the light of revelation gradually increased for four thousand years, until the Sun of Righteousness himself arose upon our world with healing in his beams. And when the infant Redeemer was born, the angel of the Lord appeared to the astonished shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem, saying: "Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, *which shall be to all people*. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." (Luke 2: 10-14.)

In pursuance of this gracious purpose, our blessed Lord announced at the beginning of his missionary labors, that "the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19: 10); adding, that "This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." (Matt. 24: 14.) And just before he ascended the mediatorial throne on high, he came to his disciples and said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth: Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatso-

ever I have commanded you ; and lo ! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world ;” (Matt. 28 : 18-20.) Hence we see that the cause of missions originated with God, and not with men.

Now, the *spirit* of missions is none other than the spirit of Christ. It is compassion for the lost, and such compassion as prompts its possessor to desire and pray for the salvation of all men, and especially for kindred and loved friends. Thus, for instance, when Andrew had found Jesus, he hastened in search of his brother Simon, and brought him to the Savior ; and as soon as Philip found the Messiah, he invited and urged Nathaniel to come and see Jesus of Nazareth. (See John 1 : 41-45.) And this accords with the experience of every Christian. All feel at times as did David, when he exclaimed : “ O ! taste and see that the Lord is good ” (Ps. 34 : 8) ; and as did Paul, when he said : “ Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.” (Rom. 10 : 1.) Hence we see that the spirit of missions is the spirit of Christ ; “ and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” (Rom. 8 : 9.) To be a Christian, then, is to be a missionary in heart ; and all true Christians will become missionaries in practice, if taught according to the Scriptures.

Now, the natural order is the scriptural order of missions—“ *beginning at Jerusalem.*” When a sinner hears the Gospel, his first duty is to seek his own salvation, then that of his kindred and neighbors ; and last, but not least, the salvation of all men.

The spirit of missions, like leaven in the meal, influences those nearest to it first, and then operates through them upon others more remote, and thus extends its benevolent influence with an ever-widening circle, until it reaches the circumference of human existence. *Home* missions, therefore, hold *prior* claims upon us, and prepare the way for *foreign* missions. Accordingly, the Savior first, and then his inspired apostles after him, devoted several years to home evangelization, before engaging in the work of foreign missions. Yet they are parts of one grand whole, and hence there is a reciprocal influence between them. Though the first Christian missionaries commenced their labors at Jerusalem, yet they went forth at length into all the world, and preached the Gospel to every creature, "the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following."

In explaining and urging the claims of missions from the Bible, we shall consider home and foreign missions together, as constituent parts of the same great enterprise. Suffer me, then, to urge the claims of home and foreign missions,

## I. FROM THE COMMISSION AND EXAMPLE OF CHRIST.

1. *From the Commission of Christ.* This commission is just as binding upon us as it was upon the apostles and first churches. It was given to the apostles, not as disciples, nor as a church, neither as ministers merely, but *as the inspired founders and instructors of all the churches to the end of time*; and it was given to them *for the churches*, as the permanent

*executives* in Christ's kingdom on earth, to whom the laws and ordinances of the kingdom were committed for enforcement and observance. Hence the promise of the Savior:—"And lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28: 20.) Thus the commission was given to the *churches* through the apostles, and the obligation to preach the Gospel to every creature rests upon the churches.

Accordingly, the apostles, as Christ's plenipotentiaries on earth, first made disciples and baptized them, then organized them into separate and independent churches, and then delivered unto them Christ's laws and ordinances, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them." (Matt. 28: 19.) Thus the whole matter of discipline, formative and corrective, together with the administration of baptism and the celebration of the Lord's Supper, was intrusted by Christ, through the apostles, to his *successive churches as such*, and not to the ministry. Jesus never authorized nor established a clerical church. The ministry is an office *in* the churches, and not *over* the churches, as men would have it. Not even the apostles themselves ever dared to usurp these inalienable rights of the churches, but as "the servants of the churches for Jesus' sake," they bowed with cheerful submission to church sovereignty. As inspired instructors, they authoritatively taught the churches all things necessary to their faith and practice, but no apostle of Christ ever interfered with the sovereignty and independency of any church. Accordingly, our Lord commended the church of Ephesus, because it

had arraigned and tried certain men claiming to be apostles (Rev. 2 : 2.) ; and Paul praised the Corinthian church, because it kept the ordinances as he had delivered them unto it. (1 Cor. 11 : 2.)

It is evident, then, that the commission was given to the apostles *for the churches*, and that they delivered it *to the churches*, to be carried out in all its requirements by them, as the permanent executives in Christ's kingdom on earth ; and, therefore, it is binding upon the churches *us such*, to the end of the world. The churches of Christ constitute the ground and pillar of the truth, and preserve the orthodoxy of the ministry. The Lord Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit, calls and endows men with suitable gifts to preach the Gospel, and it devolves upon the churches to cultivate and develop these gifts, and then to ordain, send forth, and support men thus qualified, to preach and administer the ordinances for them. The churches, therefore, properly and truly preach the Gospel and administer the ordinances by their authorized agents ; while ministers are the servants of the churches for Jesus' sake, and, as such, are justly entitled to a competent support, *provided*, they are faithful and give themselves wholly to the work of the ministry. As it is written : " The laborer is worthy of his hire," and should be supported ; for, " even so hath the Lord ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live on the Gospel." (Luke 10 : 17 ; 1 Cor. 9 : 14.) Hence, we see that competent and faithful ministers have a divine right to a comfortable living for themselves and families ; they are not clerical beneficiaries or paupers ?

2. *From the example of Christ.* Jesus Christ not only came into the world to save sinners, by offering himself a sacrifice for sin, but he was himself “the apostle and High Priest of our profession.” (Heb. 3 : 1 ; compare Isa. 61 : 1–3.) He was pre-eminently a *home* missionary. His whole public life was one continuous series of missionary labor. As soon as the devil had ended his first great temptation, Jesus returned into Galilee, in the power of the Spirit ; and he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up ; and, as was his custom, he entered into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read and expound the Scriptures. (See Luke 4 : 16–20.) Thus he went from city to city, and from village to village, throughout the length and breadth of Palestine “preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying : The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand ; repent ye and believe the Gospel.” (Mark 1 : 14, 15.)

Our Lord not only labored as a missionary himself, but he also called and instructed suitable men to aid him in this great work. He first qualified and sent forth “*the twelve*” to labor among the lost sheep of the house of Israel ; and “they went out and preached that men should repent.” (Matt. 10 : 1–10 ; Mark 6 : 12.) He next appointed “*other seventy also*, and sent them forth two and two before his face, into every city and place whither he himself would come. . . . And the seventy returned again with joy, saying : Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy word.” (Luke 10 : 1–17.) These first missionaries all went forth under the solemn injunction to “pray the Lord

of the harvest that he would send forth more laborers into his harvest," and to rely solely upon the liberality of their hearers for a support; "for the laborer is worthy of his meat." This was strictly home mission work, preparatory to preaching the Gospel to every creature. Thus the commission and example of Christ enforce the claims of missions. We urge their claims,

## II. FROM THE EXAMPLE AND TEACHINGS OF THE APOSTLES.

1. *From the example of the apostles.* When Jesus had finished his personal work on earth, and was about to ascend up on high, leading captivity captive, he gave his final commission to "*the eleven*," saying: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned." (Mark 16: 15, 16); adding: "But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke 24: 49.)

Now, the commission of Christ, as thus extended, embraces both home and foreign missions, and the apostles so understood it, and hence acted and taught accordingly; for as soon as they were endued with power by the Holy Spirit to speak and write in various tongues, they immediately resumed the work of home missions on the day of Pentecost—"beginning at Jerusalem," as the Savior had commanded them; and for some eight years they confined their missionary labors to the home field, until the door of faith was opened by Peter to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius,

about A. D. 41. Nor did they preach extensively beyond Judea and the adjacent countries for some twelve years, and then only to the dispersed Jews. (See Acts 10 and 11.) It was not until about A. D. 44 or 45, that the work of foreign missions was fully commenced by the church at Antioch. (See Acts 13.)

But the world was the field, and the commission was world-wide. Accordingly, the apostles and evangelists, after having restricted their labors chiefly to the home field for about twelve years, now went forth in obedience to the command of their ascended Lord, "testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," and planted the standard of the cross in every known land within the short period of some twenty years. Paul himself fully preached the Gospel from Illyricum round about unto Jerusalem, embracing some twenty-four different provinces of the Roman empire. (Rom. 15: 19.) This was both home and foreign missionary work, performed in the order prescribed by the Savior; and the example of the inspired apostles, like that of Christ, was designed for our instruction and imitation. They were practical missionaries, in obedience to the command, and in imitation of the example of their Lord and Master; and Paul exhorts all Christians to be followers of him, even as he was also of Christ. (1 Cor. 11: 1.)

2. *From the teachings of the inspired apostles.* Now, the commission of Christ, as recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, taken together, clearly indicates the *divine order* of conducting home and foreign mis-

sions, and the apostles and first Christians observed that order. While it enjoins the duty of going into all the world and preaching the Gospel to every creature, it expressly requires us to commence at home—"beginning *at Jerusalem*;" and it imposes upon all churches and ministers the solemn obligation to preach and sustain the Gospel at home and abroad to the end of time, as is plain from the subjoined promise of our Lord: "*And lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*" (Matt. 28: 20.) The duty to go and preach the Gospel devolves especially upon the ministers of Christ, while the obligation to send and support them is equally binding upon the churches; and neither party can escape the responsibility, though they may neglect the duty. Necessity is equally laid upon all.

The apostles so understood the Savior, and enforced the claims of missions upon the churches, in the order prescribed by the commission. Accordingly, Paul, to the Romans, remarks: "That blindness in part had happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles should be brought in. And so all Israel (then living) shall be saved; as it is written: There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. For as ye (Gentiles) in times past, have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these (Jews) also now not believed, that through your mercy (exercised in missionary effort), they also may obtain mercy." (Rom. 11: 25-31.) In

exhorting the church at Philippi to be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom they should shine as lights in the world, the apostle adds: "*Holding forth the word of life*;" that is, by a consistent example, godly conversation, liberal contributions, fervent prayer, and active missionary effort at home and abroad. To the Hebrew Christians the same apostle said: "But to do good and to communicate (of their means) forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Heb. 13: 16.) And to the churches of Galatia the apostle wrote: "As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. (Gal. 6: 10.)

Paul not only taught the churches directly, but also through Timothy, Titus, and other ministers. To Timothy he said: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." (1 Tim. 6: 17-19.) And to Titus the apostle adds: "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." (Titus 3: 8.) So all the apostles taught the early churches and ministers of Christ,

and it was equally designed for us ; “for whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.” (Rom. 15 : 4.) It is evident, therefore, from the teachings of the inspired apostles, that it is the duty of all Christians to hold forth the word of life to a perishing world ; to do good and to communicate liberally of their means ; and thus to labor individually and unitedly for the salvation of all men. Hence we see that the example and teachings of the apostles enforce the claims of missions upon all. We urge the claims of missions,

### III. FROM THE PRACTICE OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCHES.

No one can read the Acts of the apostles and the epistles to the churches attentively, without perceiving that the primitive Christians possessed the spirit, assumed the character, and performed the duties of practical missionaries. The apostolic churches, both in their individual and associated capacities, voluntarily engaged in the work of home and foreign missions.

1. *They engaged in the work of home missions.* The model church at Jerusalem was decidedly missionary in spirit and practice, and took the lead in home missions. The one hundred and twenty disciples continued with one accord in prayer and supplication for the Holy Spirit, from the ascension of our Lord until Pentecost had fully come, when three thousand willing converts were baptized and *added* to the church in a

single day. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers; praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved; and soon the number of men was about five thousand. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." (See Acts 1:14; 2:41-47; 3:4; 5:14.)

And even when the members and ministers of this first church were driven from their homes by persecution, "and were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, *except the apostles*," they "went every-where preaching the Word." (Acts 8:1-4.) Wherever individuals were converted and churches constituted, they labored zealously to Christianize the communities in which they dwelt. Both men and women realized the obligation, and voluntarily performed the duties of home missionaries in their several localities. Thus, for some twelve years, they imitated the example and obeyed the commission of Christ, under the direction of the inspired apostles, until churches were established "throughout all Judea, and Samaria, and Galilee," and in Syria and the neighboring countries. But the time had now come when the Gospel should be preached among heathen nations. Hence,

2. *The apostolic churches engaged in the work of foreign missions.* As the first Jewish church had taken the lead in home missions, so the first Gentile church now takes the lead in foreign missions. The church

at Antioch, in Syria, by the special direction of the Holy Spirit, appointed and ordained Barnabas and Saul as missionaries to the foreign field; "and when they had fasted and prayed, and layed their hands on them, they sent them away." (See Acts 13: 1-3.) These missionaries "being sent forth by the Holy Ghost" and the church conjointly, went out and preached the Word of the Lord first to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles, and planted churches in many parts of Asia Minor; and in about twelve months, A. D. 45-46, they returned to Antioch, "from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles." (See Acts 13 and 14.)

The example of the church at Antioch was soon followed by other churches, and the work of home and foreign missions was thenceforth carried on together. For example, the church at Philippi, which was founded by the missionary labors of Paul and Silas, itself became an active and efficient missionary body, and sustained Paul while preaching the Gospel at Thessalonica, at Rome, and other heathen cities; and the apostle mentions the fact with high commendation in his epistle to that church written from Rome, A. D. 64, when he was preaching the Gospel in bonds and imprisonment in that imperial city. Says he: "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now, at the last, your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye

were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Notwithstanding, ye have well done that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now, ye Philippians, know also, that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. But I have all and abound; I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you—an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.” (Phil. 4: 10, 14–16, 18.)

Such was the spirit and such the practice of all the apostolic churches. Every convert was a missionary in heart and practice, and every church was a missionary society, while every minister was both an agent and missionary for life. As individuals and as churches they voluntarily engaged in the work of home and foreign missions, and hence the rapid spread of the Gospel during the apostolic age. The love of Christ constrained them, and they lived not unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again. (2 Cor. 5: 14, 15.)

3. *The apostolic churches voluntarily united in sustaining missions at home and abroad.* The churches in Palestine were generally poor, and greatly oppressed by persecution; and when Agabus came from Jerusalem to Antioch, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the land, “Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren who dwelt in

Judea; which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." (Acts 11: 27-30.) Through the agency of Paul and others, the Gentile churches generally co-operated in this benevolent work, and thus supplied the temporal necessities of these poor saints. And here we see the reflex benefits of home and foreign missions.

Accordingly, Paul said to the church at Rome: "Now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in carnal things." (Rom. 15: 25-27.) To the church at Corinth the apostle said: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, *as I have given order to the churches of Galatia*, so do ye." (1 Cor. 16: 1.) And in his second epistle to that church he adds: "Moreover, brethren, we would have you to know the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; how that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record; yea, and beyond their power, *they were willing of themselves*, praying us with much entreaty, that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also. Therefore, as ye abound

in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, *see that ye abound in this grace also.*" (2 Cor. 8 : 1-7.)

From these and similar passages, it is evident that the churches of Macedonia, Achaia, Galatia, Corinth, Antioch, and others, by *order* of an inspired apostle, voluntarily united to aid the poor saints of Judea, thus doing good, "especially unto the household of faith." To aid weak churches, and minister to the temporal wants of poor saints has ever been an important part of Christian beneficence ; and it is strictly missionary work.

Now, we are not specially informed as to the particular *mode* of co-operation adopted by these churches, but the *fact* that they did voluntarily unite their efforts and means to aid these poor and persecuted saints is clear from the sacred records. For instance, Paul, in writing the church at Corinth on this subject, said : "Thanks be to God, who put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. For indeed he accepted the exhortation ; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. And we have sent with him *the brother* (probably Luke), whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches ; and not that only, but *who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace*, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord and declaration of your ready mind ; avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us ; providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of

men. And we have sent with them *our brother*, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you. Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you ; or our *brethren* be inquired of, they are *the messengers of the churches and the glory of Christ*. Wherefore show ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf." (2 Cor. 8: 16-24.)

Hence, we see that, while Paul and Titus acted as *general agents* in raising "*this abundance*" of missionary money, these "*messengers of the churches*" acted as their *special agents* in bearing and disbursing their contributions. And as these "*brethren*," were "*chosen of the churches*" of Macedonia, Achaia, and Galatia, for this very purpose, it is certain that there was some kind of *concert* and *co-operation* among the churches in their benevolent and missionary operations very similar to that of our churches at the present day, and that under the immediate direction of Paul.

3. *The apostolic churches united in supporting Paul among the destitute and heathen.* In apologizing to the church at Corinth for not demanding and receiving his support from them while laboring as a missionary among them, the apostle said: "Have I committed an offense in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I preached to you the Gospel of God *freely*. I robbed other churches, *taking wages of them*, to do you service, and when I was present with you and wanted, I was chargeable to no man (of you) ; for

that which was lacking to me, the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied; and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself." (2 Cor. 9: 7-9.)

Hence it is evident that the churches of Macedonia paid Paul "*wages*" for his services as a missionary, while preaching the Gospel in the idolatrous city of Corinth, and sent his salary to him by certain brethren. The expression, "I *robbed* other churches to do you service," is explained by the apostle himself: "*taking wages of them*;" that is, receiving a *salary* from them for his services; for "*wages*" is an equivalent for service rendered; and Paul would not have used the term in this connection, had he not been employed as their missionary at a stipulated salary. It is manifest, therefore, that Paul was supported by the joint contributions of the churches of Macedonia, while laboring as missionary at Corinth, and while establishing and instructing the infant church in that city until it became self-sustaining. From this passage, then, we learn: 1. That the Apostle Paul was employed by the churches of Macedonia as their missionary at Corinth, a heathen city; and, 2. That he received "*wages*," or a fixed salary, for his services while laboring in that city.

4. *The apostolic churches adopted various methods of raising money for charitable and missionary purposes.* In some instances money was raised by the *voluntary contributions of individuals*; as, for example, during the first great revival at Jerusalem, commencing with Pentecost—the Millennium in miniature. (See Acts

2: 44, 45; 4: 36, 37.) In other instances, money was raised by *the voluntary contributions of churches*; as for example, the church at Philippi for Paul, while preaching at Thessalonica and Rome. (Phil. 2: 25; 4: 18.) The churches of Macedonia, Achaia, and Corinth for the poor saints of Judea. (2 Cor. 8: 3, 4; 9: 1-7.) The churches of Macedonia for Paul while laboring as missionary at Corinth and other heathen cities. (2 Cor. 9: 7-9.) And the Gentile churches generally for the poor saints in Palestine, to which the apostle alludes in 2 Cor. 1: 11, saying: "Ye also helping together by prayer with us, that *for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons*, thanks may be given by many on our behalf."

Sometimes the apostolic churches raised money for charitable and missionary purposes by *pledges or subscriptions* previously made, and afterward collected and paid over to accredited agents for disbursement; as, for instance, the churches of Achaia, including Corinth. Accordingly, Paul wrote the church at Corinth, saying: "And herein I give my advice, for this is expedient for you who have *begun before*, not only to do, but also *to be forward a year ago*. Now, therefore, perform the doing of it, that, as there was a readiness to *will*, so there may be a *performance* also out of that which ye have; for, if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." (2 Cor. 8: 10-12.) And in 2 Cor. 9: 1-7, the apostle adds: "For, as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you; for I know the for-

wardness of your mind, for which I boast to them of Macedonia that *Achaia was ready a year ago*; and your zeal hath provoked very many. Yet have I sent the brethren (Titus and others as agents), lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready, lest happily, if they of Macedonia come with me and find you unprepared, we (not ye) should be ashamed of this same confident boasting. Therefore, I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren (Titus and others, see 2 Cor. 8: 17-19), that they should go before unto you, and make up (or collect) beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready as a matter of bounty, and not of covetousness. . . Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity, for the Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

But the APOSTOLIC PLAN of raising money for charitable and missionary purposes adopted by the primitive churches generally, was by *weekly contributions made on the Lord's day*, in which every member participated according to his or her ability. This plan was devised and proposed to the several churches by Paul himself, as best adapted to cultivate the *spirit* and establish the *habit* of systematic beneficence, and to secure ample means for all charitable and missionary purposes. Accordingly, the apostle wrote the church at Corinth, as follows: "Now, concerning the collections for the saints, as *I have given order to the churches of Galatia*, so do ye. *Upon the first day of the week* let every one of you lay by him in store, as

God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings (or collections) when I come." (1 Cor. 16: 1, 2.) The great object of Paul in ordering the adoption of this plan by the churches was to cultivate the spirit of benevolence, and establish the habit of *systematic beneficence* in all the churches, and to accustom every member to contribute statedly for charitable and missionary uses, according as God might prosper them from week to week and from year to year. The *spirit* of this injunction would be met if every church member should estimate fairly and fully his *income* (not his surplus) from all sources at regular stated periods, as his means become available, and "lay by him in store" a just and liberal proportion for charitable and missionary purposes, and if *one-tenth* was required of God's ancient people for the support of his ministers and temple services, surely *no less* could be required of us to whom much more has been given than to them.

Now, as this *PLAN* was adopted in the first churches by "*order*" of an inspired apostle, and as it is equally adapted to churches of all ages and countries, and as some plan is necessary to cultivate the spirit and establish the habit of systematic beneficence, and to provide adequate means for charitable and missionary purposes, there is no reason why all our churches, and every member of them, should not adopt and carry it out at once. The modern "*Envelope System*" may meet the case, if properly carried out.

It is not so much the want of benevolence and liberality in our churches as it is the want of *system* that prevents the enlargement of our missionary enter-

prises. The great want of modern Baptist churches is the *habit* of systematic giving among the members, and no better plan can be adopted than the one here enjoined by the Apostle Paul. Let all our churches, and every member, therefore, at once adopt and systematically carry out this *divine plan*, and henceforth there will be no lack of means to support the Gospel at home and abroad, and very soon "great voices in heaven" and on earth will proclaim that "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." (Rev. 11: 15.)

If time would permit, the claims of missions might be further urged from the promises of God's word and from indisputable facts, but we must close with a few DEDUCTIONS from the subject. Hence we learn,

1. *The identity of ancient and modern missions.* They are identical in origin, in spirit, in object, and in practice. Modern missions are but a continuation of that grand and glorious enterprise which was purposed by the Father of mercies, predicted by the holy prophets, inaugurated by the blessed Savior, and carried out and extended by the inspired apostles and the churches established by them. Ancient and modern missions have the same great *end* in view—the glory of God and the salvation of lost sinners; and though darkness covers much of our earth, and gross darkness many nations, still that glorious end shall yet be accomplished. (Luke 2: 14.)

2. *The method of conducting home and foreign missions was the same then as now.*

Our *method* of conducting missions is substantially the same as that of ancient missions. Indeed, considering the state of the world now and then, and the different circumstances surrounding the early Christians and ourselves, the similarity is truly wonderful, and can be accounted for only by the fact that the missionary enterprise is one and the same in all ages. The chief difference arises from the fact that the apostolic churches were more self-denying and zealous than modern churches, and the first ministers of Christ were more devoted and laborious than modern ministers generally. To be a Christian or a minister then, was to spend and be spent for Christ and his cause.

The apostles, as the inspired founders and instructors of the churches, not only obeyed the commission of Christ themselves, in the prescribed order, but also enjoined the same duties upon all Christians and ministers to the end of time. While "giving themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4), they also acted as *general agents* in aiding and directing the churches and pastors in raising money for charitable and missionary purposes, and encouraged Titus and other ministers to labor as evangelists and agents conjointly, under their general direction. And the primitive disciples of Christ, instead of avoiding and repulsing these agents, "prayed them with much entreaty to receive their gifts." (2 Cor. 8:4.) Such agents were necessary then, as they are now, and probably always will be necessary. They are among our most useful men—the glory of Christ and the partners of Paul; and, as such, they

should be cordially received and highly esteemed for their works' sake by all our churches and pastors.

The first churches, acting under the direction of the inspired apostles, voluntarily engaged in the work of home and foreign missions, both in their *individual* and *associated* capacities, giving *priority* to home missions, as commanded by the Savior. They not only ordained and supported pastors to instruct and watch for their own souls, but also sent out and supported suitable men as *evangelists* and *missionaries*, giving them "*wages*" for their services. They adopted plans for raising money for charitable and missionary purposes, appointed "*messengers*," or local agents, to collect and disburse their funds, and received the reports of the missionaries in their employ. (See Acts 14: 27.) Whether they had missionary boards or committees, is not expressly stated, but certain it is that they appointed suitable "*brethren*" as their "*messengers*," or agents, to do the same work.

3. *That while home and foreign missions are but parts of one grand enterprise, still the home field claims our first attention.* Both the natural and scriptural order of Christian benevolence is, *to begin at home and work outward*. As the leaven in the meal impregnates the whole mass, by operating on and through the nearest particles successively, so Christian benevolence begins with those nearest and dearest to us, and extends *outward*, by acting upon and through them on the next nearest successively, until it reaches the remotest nations of the earth—thus going into all the world, *by beginning at Jerusalem*.

Accordingly, our Savior came first to his own and labored as a home missionary among them, as the means of benefiting all nations through them. Thus, when he sent out his apostles and first evangelists, he restricted their labors to the home field. And thus, when he commissioned "the eleven" to go and disciple all nations, he required them to commence at home. As we have seen, the practice of the apostles and first churches was in perfect accordance with the example and teaching of Christ. All, except the apostle to the Gentiles, confined their labors chiefly to the Jews for some twelve years; and even Paul every-where gave the Jews the first offers of salvation. (See Acts 13: 46.) And this is not only the natural and scriptural order of conducting missions, but in the end it is the most successful means of converting the world. Hence, while no less should be done abroad, still more should be done at home.

4. *That home and foreign missions hold peculiar claims upon us as Baptists.* As individuals and as churches, we are solemnly bound to *do what we can* to promote the cause of Christ at home and abroad. We were converted and are kept on earth for this very purpose. And though we may neglect the duty, still we can not escape the obligation. Necessity is laid upon us, and woe is unto us if we neglect to hold forth the word of life to the perishing millions of our race. Our churches and pastors, therefore, should labor together in their respective fields, "each building over against his own house," as did God's ancient people; while all should co-operate together in sending

out and supporting evangelists and missionaries to labor among the destitute and the heathen, until all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest.

As the representatives of Christ's first churches and ministers, holding the truth as it is in Jesus, we are under peculiar obligations to go or send into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Every Baptist is a missionary for life, every Baptist church is a missionary society, and every Baptist minister is both an agent and missionary, as were Paul, Titus, and all the early ministers of Christ. Every pastor should instruct and urge the people of his charge to adopt *the divine plan* of benevolence, to give to the cause of missions *habitually, systematically, and statedly*, as the Lord prospers them from year to year; and every member should "*lay by him in store*" for charitable and missionary purposes, according to his or her ability. Thus all would be fellow-helpers to the truth.

5. *That we have peculiar encouragements to prosecute the work of missions.*

The cause of missions, commenced by the Savior himself, and continued by his apostles and first churches, was revived in England by Wm. Carey, Andrew Fuller, and other Baptists in 1792, and by American Baptists in 1813. The missionary spirit thus awakened among our churches and ministers, has spread throughout all christendom, and multitudes, living and dead, owe their salvation to missionary effort. From a feeble few, our denomination has increased to nearly two millions since the revival of modern missions, and the work is rapidly extending. This is the "Lord's

doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes." We may well thank God and take courage; for hitherto the Lord hath helped us.

As we have shown, the missionary enterprise is of divine origin, and its final success is certain. Much has already been accomplished—far more than is apparent to human view; and the morning light of Millennial glory already gilds the horizon. In the providence of God, all nations are now open to the Gospel, and the knowledge of the Lord shall soon fill the whole earth. Ere long, we shall witness the universal triumphs of the Gospel, when "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." (Dan. 7: 27.)

# MISSILES OF TRUTH.

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## MISSILE NO. VI.

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### OBJECTIONS TO MODERN DANCING.

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AN ESSAY WRITTEN IN 1870, AND PUBLISHED BY THE  
REQUEST OF MANY BRETHREN.

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DANCING is an exercise of very ancient date, and was always expressive of joy, whether holy or unholy. The Bible mentions but *two kinds* of dancing—one a *religious service* performed on joyful occasions, in which the sexes did not unite. (See Exod. 15 : 20 ; Judges 11 : 34 ; 2 Sam. 18 : 6 ; 2 Sam. 6 : 14 ; Ps. 30 : 11 ; Jeremiah 31 : 4.) The other kind was a *worldly amusement*, to which the religious service had been prostituted by the wicked, and in which both sexes united. Only three instances of this kind of dancing are recorded in the Scriptures: 1. The “*vain and shameless fellows*,” to whom Michael alludes in 2 Samuel 6 : 16–20. 2. The ungodly parents mentioned in Job 21 : 11, whose “*children dance*,” and who say unto God, “Depart from us ; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.”

(Job 21: 7-14.) And, 3. That memorable scene of impiety and revelry which resulted in the *murder* of John the Baptist. (Mathew 14: 3-12.) Now, *modern* dancing is of the *latter* kind, namely, a *worldly amusement*, and to this there are many **SERIOUS OBJECTIONS**, only a few of which can be presented here. We shall address ourselves especially to Christians.

### I. MODERN DANCING IS PURELY A WORDLY AMUSEMENT.

The word of God forbids *conformity* to this world in its vain amusements, and requires a new and holy life, *conformed* to the Gospel of Christ. As it is written: "Be not confirmed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Romans 12: 2.) "Only let your conversation (conduct) be as becometh the Gospel of Christ." (Phil. 1: 27.) Now, when Christians engage in the giddy dance, or encourage it in others, are they not guilty of violating these plain precepts?

The Bible also prohibits the *love* of the world, including its honors, riches, and *pleasures*. As it is written: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John 2: 15, 16.) That dancing is one of the *favorite pleasures* of the world, none will deny; and it is well known that those who habitually

indulge in this fascinating amusement become *passionately fond* of it. Indeed, the passion of the *gambler* for cards is not more insatiate than that of the *dancer* for this amusement. And this very love of dancing is often one of the greatest obstacles to the conversion of sinners, as well as to the spiritual enjoyment and progress of young Christians. During a pastorate of twenty-six years, the writer has witnessed many sad examples of this fact. Hence it is manifest that all Christians are here prohibited from either dancing themselves or encouraging it in others; and those professors of religion who persist in the practice give painful evidence that "the love of the Father is not in them."

## II. MODERN DANCING HAS THE APPEARANCE OF EVIL.

The advocates of dancing admit this fact, in the very plea that it is evil only in *appearance*, and not in reality. They contend that dancing is not *as bad* as some other forms of amusement in which Christians engage. This may or may not be true; but even if it were unquestionably true, still it would be the duty of Christians to abstain from and discountenance modern dancing; for it confessedly *has* the appearance of evil. We are positively commanded to "*abstain from all appearance of evil.*" (1 Thess. 5: 22.) That is, abstain not only from what is evil in itself, but also from whatever has the *appearance* of evil, and is so regarded by the world. For a Christian to dance or encourage it in others, therefore, causes his "*good to be*

*evil spoken of*" by the ungodly, and thus weakens his or her influence for doing good.

Unconverted friends may plead that dancing is a genteel and harmless amusement, and by this means induce young Christians to participate with them, but at the same time these very friends regard it as highly improper in professors of religion to dance; and, therefore, have very little confidence in the piety of those who join them in this wordly amusement.

The idea that partial conformity to the world in questionable things will recommend our holy religion and secure the respect of the ungodly, is both dangerous and false. Men of the world love *consistency*; and they very well know that Christians are required to "abstain from all appearance of evil," and to "keep themselves unspotted from the world;"—"perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Hence it necessarily diminishes their confidence in our piety to indulge with them in this vain amusement. What anxious or dying sinner would think of calling on a *dancing* professor of religion to instruct and pray for him? To such a professor he would say, "Physician, heal thyself."

And that which has the "appearance of evil" in Christians has the same appearance when they encourage it in their children or others. The *approval* of evil is *evil itself*; and if modern dancing has the appearance of evil, as all admit, then the *approval* of it must have the same appearance. So God himself regards it. Said he: "I will judge (or punish) the house of Eli forever, for the iniquity which he

knoweth ; because his sons made themselves vile, and *he restrained them not.*" (1 Sam. 3 : 13.) Parents are responsible to God and to society for the evil which they might restrain in their children and others. And the same is true of all Christians.

### III. MODERN DANCING OBSCURES THE LIGHT OF CHRISTIANS.

To all his followers Jesus says : " Ye are the light of the world. . . Therefore, let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 5 : 14, 16.) Christians are here required to let their light shine before men by *holy living and good works*, and thereby constrain others to *glorify our heavenly Father*. They are to be " living epistles of Christ," known and read of all men. As he who holds a *torch* in his hand is distinctly seen by those who are in the dark, so Christians are seen and watched by the ungodly. And men of the world judge of our holy religion and are influenced far more by what they see in Christians than by what they read or hear from the word of God. Hence the importance and propriety of our Lord's injunction : "*Therefore let your light so shine,*" etc.

But when the disciples of Christ mingle in the giddy dance, or encourage it in others by their presence or otherwise, they necessarily *obscure their light*, and men of the world are rather driven from the Savior than drawn to him. "Take heed, therefore," adds Jesus, "that the light that is in thee be not darkness; for if the light that is in thee be darkness, how

great is that darkness." (Matt. 6: 23; Luke 11: 35.)

Accordingly, Paul exhorts Christians to "be harmless and blameless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom *ye shine (or shine ye) as lights in the world.*" (Phil. 2: 15.) Now, we ask, are Christians "harmless and blameless, the sons of God without rebuke," in the BALL-ROOM, or in the *dancing party*; and do they there "shine as lights in the world?" Is not their light darkness when they mingle with the gay and godless in the merry dance? and are they not justly liable to "*rebuke*" when they participate in this worldly amusement?

And that which obscures the light of Christians when done by themselves, unavoidably has the same effect when encouraged in their children or others. Christian parents are taught to train up their children in the way they *should go*, with the promise that even when old they will not depart from it. (Prov. 22: 6.) But is *modern dancing*, or even the *dancing-school*, any part of such training? Rather, does it not tend to lead children in the way they *should not go*? Let facts answer these important questions. Hence it is evident that modern dancing in all its forms, necessarily tends to *obscure the light* of Christians, and, therefore, they should neither practice nor encourage it.

#### IV. MODERN DANCING GIVES OFFENSE TO GOOD BRETHREN.

It is a fearful thing either to offend or cause the

least of Christ's disciples to offend. Speaking of this, our Lord says: "Whoso shall offend (or cause to offend) one of these little ones who believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea." (Matthew 28: 6.) But it is not only the ignorant and weak who are offended by modern dancing, but the overwhelming majority of the wise and good believe the practice to be glaringly inconsistent with the Christian profession and ruinous in its tendency to the souls of men; and hence they are deeply grieved with those brethren and sisters who either dance or encourage it in their children and others. What professor of religion can reasonably expect the blessing of God upon himself or family who thus knowingly and willfully offends good brethren and sisters?

Now, if dancing were a *commanded duty*, then Christians would be bound to practice and encourage it, even though it might give offense to others; for "we must obey God rather than man;" but no one will plead this in justification of modern dancing. There is *no sin*, therefore, in abstaining from the practice, while there *is sin* in indulging in it. As it is written: "*Give no offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.*" (1 Cor. 10: 32.) "*For,*" adds Paul, "*when ye sin so against the brethren and wound their weak consciences, ye sin against Christ.*" (1 Cor. 8: 12.) The argument from these passages is this: To give unnecessary offense to the brethren and wound their consciences is a sin against

Christ ; modern dancing gives unnecessary offense to brethren and wounds their consciences ; therefore it is a sin against Christ either to dance or encourage it.

Every Christian must have *doubts* as to the propriety of modern dancing, and this, of itself, ought to restrain all from either practicing or encouraging it. It is manifestly a sin to indulge in any thing of the *propriety* of which we have doubts. Accordingly, Paul, in speaking of things offered in sacrifice to idols, says : “ He that *doubteth* is damned (or condemned) if he eat, because he eateth not of *faith* ; for *whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*” (Rom. 14 : 23.) This is a *general principle*, applicable to *dancing*, and to every thing else of which we doubt the propriety.

But even if modern dancing were an innocent amusement, as some contend, still it would be the bounden duty of all Christians to abstain from and discourage it, *because it gives offense to good brethren.* When the question of eating meats that had been offered to idols arose among the first Christians, how nobly and promptly did Paul determine : “ If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh (*i. e.*, offered to idols) while the world standeth.” (Rom. 14 : 13–23.) Though not, in the apostle’s estimation, wrong in itself ; yet, like Jesus, Paul “ *pleased not himself* ” by willful indulgence, lest he should hinder the Gospel, and offend or cause his brethren to offend. Thus all Christians should act in regard to *dancing*. The principle laid down here by the apostle is of univereal application, and extends to every thing that needlessly gives offense

to good brethren, or causes them to offend, as dancing unquestionably does.

#### V. MODERN DANCING LEGITIMATELY LEADS TO GREATER EVILS.

There may be nothing morally wrong in the mere act of *playing cards* for amusement; but it legitimately leads to gambling, drunkenness, debauchery, and many other evils, and, therefore, it ought neither to be practiced nor encouraged by Christians. That parent who would employ or encourage a skillful gambler to teach his son the use of cards, would be justly condemned by all prudent persons. So there may be nothing morally wrong in the mere physical act of *dancing* for amusement; but it legitimately leads to frivolity, gayety, irreligion, and numerous other evils, which drown men's souls in perdition; and therefore it ought neither to be practiced nor encouraged by Christians. And the parent who teaches and encourages his or her children to dance, is justly chargeable with whatever evils may follow, and must soon give account to God.

The *associations* and *consequences* of social dancing, and especially of *balls*, are incalculably worse than the thing itself, and yet they are inseparable. It is infinitely better to be ignorant of all such fascinating and ruinous evils. Accordingly, Paul says: "*I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.*" (Rom. 16: 19.) It was the knowledge of what we had better not have known that brought sin with all its sad consequences upon our race.

The *whole tendency* of modern dancing, therefore, is

to irreligion and final ruin. How could it be otherwise? What are the influences which it brings to bear upon the *youthful heart*, just when it is most susceptible of religious impressions, and in most danger of being fatally hardened? How is the young mind engrossed while preparing for the gay assembly! God is not in all the thoughts! Heaven and hell are forgotten! What feverish excitement while engaged in the merry dance! And when the scene is ended, how is the mind dissipated, and the young heart sealed against God's Spirit and truth! Many sad examples might be given, but we have space for only one. In the revival in which the writer embraced Christ some sixty of his friends and relatives were hopefully converted. Among the anxious a beautiful young lady was found for several days. But a social dance came off in the adjoining neighborhood, and Mary T. was induced to attend. She was overcome by her love of dancing, and participated. For the time being her convictions were stifled. She returned to the revival next day, but refused to come to the altar of prayer. Her anxiety ceased, and she became callous. In a few weeks she was seized with a fever, from which she never recovered. She persistently refused to talk on the subject of religion, and *died in hopeless despair!*

And thus by cruel parental indulgence many loved sons and daughters are lost forever, and eternity alone can answer the momentous question: "*What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall he give in exchange for his soul?*" (Matt. 16: 26.) As it is written: "When

*desire* hath conceived, it bringeth forth *sin*; and *sin*, when it is finished, bringeth forth *death*." (James 1: 15.) How fearful the reckoning of those *pleasure-loving* parents who encourage their children and others, either directly or indirectly, in that which legitimately leads to irreligion and final ruin, as *modern dancing* unavoidably does. And how much more fearful the doom of those *time-serving* ministers who either encourage or connive at dancing among those for whose souls they are required to watch, as they that must give account to God!

#### VI. MODERN DANCING IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH EVERY CHRISTIAN DUTY.

Paul, in addressing Christians, says: "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, *do all to the glory of God*." (1 Cor. 10: 31.) Does the Christian *dance* to the glory of God at the present day? Is the glory of God the object of parents in sending their children to the dancing-school, or in dressing and encouraging them to participate in the social dance or the public ball? Yet the inspired injunction is: "*Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*." This command covers the whole ground, and includes *whatsoever* we do.

Again, Paul says: "*In every thing* by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." (Phil. 4: 6.) When Christians desire to dance, do they make known their requests unto God? When parents send their children to the dancing-school, or encourage them in danc-

ing, do they “by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving,” make known their requests unto God, and invoke his blessing upon their efforts? Yet the command is: “*In every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.*” How dare a Christian practice or encourage any thing upon which he or she can not in faith and hope ask God’s blessing?

And again, Paul says: “Provoke not your children to wrath, but *bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*” (Eph. 6: 4.) Is modern dancing any part of the “nurture and admonition of the Lord?” Rather, does it not legitimately tend to counteract the good effects of all religious nurture? And if dancing children be converted, it is *in spite* of the influence of such worldly-minded parents, and owing to the blessing of God upon the efforts of others. Such children are truly “*brands plucked out of the fire.*” They are monuments of mercy.

And still again Paul says: “Let us, therefore, follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another.” (Rom. 14: 19.) Is modern dancing one of “the things which make for peace?” And does it tend to mutual Christian edification? Let distracted churches, backsliding young Christians, and grieved brethren and sisters answer these questions. The same is true of every other precept. Hence, we see that modern dancing is incompatible with every Christian duty; and, therefore, it ought neither to be practiced nor encouraged by Christians.

Such, then, are a few of the many OBJECTIONS to modern dancing; it is purely a *worldly amusement*; it confessedly *has the appearance of evil*; it necessarily *obscures the light of Christians*; it gives *unnecessary offense to good brethren*; it legitimately *leads to greater evils*; and it is *wholly incompatible with every Christian duty*. We close with a few

#### PRACTICAL DEDUCTIONS.

We learn from this subject,

1. *That Modern Dancing is unscriptural and of evil tendency.* Though dancing is not a sin in itself, yet it is a worldly amusement which *leads to sin*; and, therefore, it ought to be discountenanced and opposed in all its forms by Christians. Wherever it is allowed, it endangers the peace of churches and dwarfs the piety of young members, as well as hinders the salvation of sinners. Especially is it the duty of Christian parents to check and restrain the very buddings of this evil in their children. If the taste be not formed in youth, very few will ever desire to dance. Parents can and ought to control their children in this matter.

But alas! some parents seem more than willing that their children should dance, and freely expend money to train them for it. Instead of opposing the evil, they *apologize* for it, and plead that it is a harmless amusement. And a few mothers aid and abet the pernicious practice in their daughters, while they shield themselves behind their unconverted husbands. It is not strange that the husbands of such wives are uncon-

verted. The wonder would be that they ever should be converted.

2. *That no valid reason can be urged in favor of Modern Dancing.* It does no good, while it does much harm. Dancing is not promotive of real happiness; the writer knows this from painful experience, as well as from observation. It is not a necessary accomplishment; many who never danced are just as accomplished as those who excel in the art. It is a delusion of dandy dancing-masters that ease and gracefulness of manners can be acquired only in the dancing-school; facts abundantly prove the contrary. Nor is there any thing intellectual in dancing; a stupid *African* or even a *monkey* can be taught to dance well.

But there are innocent and rational amusements in which the young may profitably and safely participate. If the time and money wasted in preparing for the giddy dance were expended in procuring and reading interesting and instructive books and periodicals, young men and young ladies would be qualified to entertain themselves and others in a rational and useful manner. And such enjoyment as far exceeds that of dancing as an intelligent lady or gentleman exceeds a baboon or monkey. Parents should provide children with such means of instruction and entertainment, and share the pleasures with them. Such enjoyments are worthy of intelligent beings, and would cost much less than dancing apparel and dancing-schools.

3. *The duty of Churches and Pastors in regard to Dancing.* As for those churches and ministers who advocate and practice dancing, they are rather to be

pitied than blamed. If they have no higher enjoyment, it would be cruel to deny them this. While they imagine themselves "rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing," they know not that that they are spiritually "*wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*" (Rev. 3: 17.)

But all true churches and ministers have higher and purer enjoyments. And it is the special duty of every pastor to preach, and talk, and write against modern dancing. Pastors can not innocently hold their peace on the subject, much less advocate and encourage this pernicious practice.

And it is equally the duty of churches to restrain and rebuke the growing evil. They should co-operate with their pastors in opposing it, and exemplify the truth in their practice. But those church members who persist in either practicing or encouraging dancing should be delivered over to Satan until they repent and learn to walk worthy of their high vocation. It is far better to maintain peace and purity than to retain such disorderly members. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," and that church which indulges its members in this evil practice thereby becomes a partaker of their evil deeds.

"*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*" (Phil. 4: 8.)

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
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